

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

FROM INDIVIDUAL TRAGEDY TO SECURITY PROBLEM

Loneliness in the Finnish parliamentary discussion from 1980s to 2010s

Sari Eestilä
Master's Thesis
European and Nordic Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Helsinki
January 2021



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Tiedekunta – Fakultet – Faculty Faculty of Social Sciences		Koulutusohjelma – Utbildningsprogram – Degree Programme European and Nordic Studies	
Tekijä – Författare – Author Sari Eestilä			
Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title From individual tragedy to security problem - loneliness in the Finnish Parliamentary discussions from 1980s to 2010s			
Oppiaine/Opintosuunta – Läroämne/Studieinriktning – Subject/Study track European and Nordic Studies			
Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level Master's Thesis		Aika – Datum – Month and year 30.1.2021	Sivumäärä – Sidoantal – Number of pages 56
Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract <p>In recent years, loneliness has been talked about in the media relatively often. There are multiple studies about harmfulness of loneliness for one's health and safety both nationally and internationally.</p> <p>The aim of this master's thesis is to find out how the loneliness discourse has changed in the Finnish parliamentary discussions and why. The main research questions are: How often has loneliness been brought up between the years 1980 and 2019 in the Finnish governmental documents and which actor groups and themes can be identified in the discussion. In addition, the thesis will look at by whom have the actor groups and themes been brought up.</p> <p>The data of this thesis are governmental documents: governmental proposals, expert opinions and debate initiatives. The used methods are both quantitative and qualitative. In the first part, the data is analyzed using quantitative content analysis, more specifically categorization. By processing the data this way, one gets an answer to the first two research questions: how often has loneliness been brought up and which actor groups and themes can be identified in the discussion.</p> <p>In the second part of the thesis, the findings are analyzed using narrative analysis as a qualitative method. This reveals what kind of narratives are linked to findings and in which context and by whom they have been brought up. In the third part of the thesis, there is a brief review on the wider (socio)political environment and how it might have affected the results.</p> <p>The most important findings in this thesis are that the loneliness discussion has increased and peaked only in the 2010s. The most often mentioned group is child loneliness. Loneliness as a subjective feeling is relatively new topic in the parliamentary discussions. It started to emerge only in the 2000s and peaked after 2015.</p> <p>In the 2000s, organizations used the prevention of loneliness as an argument to get funding or to justify the importance of their work. This proves that in the 2000s loneliness had become something that is considered harmful.</p> <p>Security is a new viewpoint in the loneliness discussion: in 2010s it has started to emerge in the media as a security problem, partly because of school shootings and radical lone operators. In the 2020, the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service (Supo) mentions that lone operators are among the biggest security threats in Finland.</p> <p>While the demands towards the state has increased, loneliness in the Parliament has always been talked about through something else, or as a "side effect" of another problem.</p>			
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords loneliness, security, social policy, governmental documents, Finland			
Ohjaaja tai ohjaajat – Handledare – Supervisor or supervisors Leena Malkki and Johanna Vuorelma			
Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited Helsingin yliopiston kirjasto, Helsingfors universitets bibliotek, Helsinki University Library			
Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information			

Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1. Earlier Study	5
1.2. Aims and objectives	7
2. Research Design	9
2.1. Theory and philosophy	9
2.2. Methodology and methods	12
2.3. Research data.....	15
3. Analytical Process	17
3.1. Categorization of the data	17
3.1.1 Categorizing actor groups in the data.....	18
3.1.2. Categorizing themes in the data	19
3.2. Discourse Analysis of the data	21
3.2.1. How and by whom are the actor groups brought up in the data?	22
3.2.2. How and by whom are the themes brought up in the data?	32
4. Discussion about the findings	46
4.1. Children in the data	47
5. Conclusions	49
6. References	52

1. Introduction

According to a Statistics Finland study of 2018, 4 per cent of Finns (around 179 000 persons of the total population) feel lonely “all the time or most of the time”. A bit more than 21 per cent (around 950 000 persons) feel lonely “all the time, most of the time, or some of the time”. Loneliest, according to the same surveys, were the elderly (28,7 per cent all the time, most of the time or some of the time) and single households.¹

However, researchers have not yet reached consensus over which is the loneliest demographic group in the Finnish society. Depending on the study, the results vary from young to old and between the sexes. According to Niina Junttila, a Professor of educational psychology, young people and boys peak in the statistics.² According to Juho Saari, Professor of Social Sciences at the University of Tampere, the loneliest group is the elderly, and women are slightly lonelier than men.³ Other groups that peak in loneliness research are unemployed, immigrants and single parents.⁴ Marriage, education and Swedish as a first language seem to decrease the possibility of loneliness a great deal.⁵ According to international studies, higher number of siblings or offspring decrease the feeling of loneliness, but more for men than for women.⁶

Therefore, it seems that it is impossible to point out exactly why some people are lonely, and others are not. Furthermore, in her recent study about adult loneliness, Junttila confirms that there are lonely people in almost every workplace.⁷

In 2020, few people question the importance of tackling loneliness. In recent years, we have been surrounded by articles, news and talk shows that all repeat the same message: loneliness is risky and unhealthy, and people should be concerned about it.⁸ Saari has argued that there is no other single factor in society that weakens Finnish wellbeing as much as loneliness.⁹ There has been medical research discovering physical health problems, for example increased blood pressure and sleeping problems, caused by continuous unwanted isolation.¹⁰ Emotionally lonely children have increased

¹ Statistic Finland 2019

² Junttila 2015 p. 29, 43 and 2018 p. 30

³ Saari 2010 p. 124

⁴ Junttila 2015 p. 29, Saari 2010 p. 117,122, 125

⁵ Saari 2010 p. 124, 125

⁶ Cacioppo, Cacioppo and Broomsma 2014 p. 5

⁷ Junttila 2018 for example p. 19

⁸ Magen 2018, Brueck 2018

⁹ Saari 2016 p. 5

¹⁰ Saari 2010 p. 45

likelihood of social exclusion.¹¹ At worst, loneliness causes long-lasting psychiatric problems such as social phobia, depression and schizophrenia.¹² Lonely people are eleven times more likely to suffer from social anxiety, five times more likely to suffer from panic disorder and six times more likely to suffer from psychosis disorders.¹³ All things considered, research results have been alarming.

1.1. Earlier Study

Loneliness has been researched relatively often both in Finland and internationally. Study of loneliness started in the 1973 when a therapist Robert Weiss wrote his pioneering book *Loneliness - the experience of emotional and social isolation*.¹⁴

Before that, loneliness was a neglected topic in many fields - a fact that Weiss himself notes.¹⁵ Weiss gives a psychological explanation for this: perhaps loneliness is such a frightening topic that we wish to avoid it.¹⁶ Weiss also wrote about responsibility. *Who is responsible for this* is a question that is in the centre of almost every political debate. Almost fifty years ago, Weiss wrote:

“Along these lines, advice for the lonely would seem obvious: be pleasant, outgoing, interested in others; meet people; become part of things. If the lonely cannot behave in these ways, then they ought to enter psychotherapy, change, learn to be more outgoing.”¹⁷

Professor John Cacioppo has later taken a psychological and biological view on loneliness. Cacioppo founded a field called social neuroscience and researched social isolation and well-being of humans.¹⁸ For example, in his article *Evolutionary mechanisms for loneliness*, John Cacioppo, Stephanie Cacioppo and Dorret Boomsma view loneliness from evolutionary perspective. Their article describes how humans would not have survived without sociality, which is therefore as important as food or water for our survival.¹⁹

Loneliness has not been researched only in the human context. Studies have shown that social isolation has an effect on animals' physical health as well.²⁰ For example, a socially isolated fruit fly

¹¹ Junttila 2015 p. 42

¹² Junttila 2015 p. 42

¹³ Junttila 2018 p. 80

¹⁴ Weiss 1973

¹⁵ Weiss 1973 p. 1

¹⁶ Weiss 1973 p. 1, 10 - 11

¹⁷ Weiss 1973 p. 13

¹⁸ Rubin 2019 p. 745

¹⁹ Cacioppo, Cacioppo and Boomsma 2014 p. 3

²⁰ Cacioppo, Cacioppo and Boomsma 2014 p. 6

lives shorter than other flies, and loneliness increases the obesity and diabetes for mice.²¹ In his *Toward a Neurology of Loneliness*, John Cacioppo assures his readers that loneliness is dangerous: it increases mortality and morbidity, increases inflammation, and changes the brain.²²

Cacioppo sees loneliness as a way to avoid these psychosocial and physical symptoms. He writes:

“That is, just as physical pain is an aversive signal that evolved to motivate one to take action that minimises damage to one’s physical body, loneliness is an aversive state that motivates us to take action that minimises damage to one’s social body.”²³

Therefore, what Cacioppo etc. have shown is that loneliness is an important feeling: it tells us that we are drifting away from our group, which might endanger the survival of the human species.

In Finland, loneliness has been researched mostly from two perspectives: loneliness as part of social class and poverty (Juho Saari²⁴) and childhood loneliness (Niina Junttila²⁵). In the 2000s, loneliness has also received attention in the media, where both common people and professionals have demanded politicians to do something to loneliness and the problems it causes.²⁶

Besides Saari and Junttila, who are the most known researchers, there are others. Elisa Tiilikainen from the University of Eastern Finland has researched old age loneliness and seen how the whole life course affects one’s old age loneliness.²⁷ Sociologist Osmo Kontula has researched loneliness from the perspective of sex and relationship.²⁸ Hanna Uotila reveals in her doctoral thesis about old age and loneliness that public discussion about old people’s loneliness has been regular during recent years.²⁹

There has also been research on immigrant loneliness before 2015. Jenni Lohvansuu and Elina Luukkonen prove in their thesis (2012) that loneliness is experienced as a hindrance for a successful integration into Finnish society.³⁰ They also agree that more research is needed in order to understand the experiences of loneliness among immigrants.³¹ Indeed, it is difficult to find research

²¹ Cacioppo, Cacioppo and Boomsma 2014 p. 6

²² Cacioppo, Cacioppo and Capitanio 2014 p. 1464, 1466

²³ Cacioppo, Cacioppo and Boomsma 2014 p. 7

²⁴ e.g. Saari 2010, 2012 and 2015

²⁵ e.g. Junttila 2015

²⁶ Anttila 2011 and Kilpi 2018

²⁷ Tiilikainen 2016

²⁸ Kontula 2016 p. 164 - 181

²⁹ Uotila 2011 p. 7, 13

³⁰ Lohvansuu and Luukkonen 2012 p. 47

³¹ Lohvansuu and Luukkonen 2012 p. 62

in immigrant loneliness in Finland, and at least the research found at the University of Helsinki database does not provide any findings.

All in all, loneliness research is an active field with well-conducted studies from a multiplicity of perspectives.

However, in 2010 Juho Saari commented on how few studies have been made about the *lack* of social relationships and its effects on welfare, in comparison to those made about the *importance* of social relationships.³² Lately, there have been some changes in this, and Saari himself has researched both loneliness and happiness from the socio-political perspective.³³ In addition, the general interest in studying happiness and life-satisfaction has increased in past twenty years not only in sociology but in other fields as well.³⁴

When the study perspectives have widened, the terminology has also settled: the term underprivileged (*huono-osainen*) has been widely used in the Finnish political discussion from the 1980s, but after the end of the 1990 it has been replaced by the term marginalized (*syrjäytynyt*).³⁵ Marginalization is not a simple concept. Sometimes it is portrayed as lack of personal agency or exclusion from important social fields such as employment. Marginalization is a process, and many researchers agree that it often begins already in the early childhood.³⁶

In my study, I will focus on the aforementioned *lack* of social relationships. Following Saari, I treat loneliness as a socio-political issue, rather than an individual problem. Even with all the studies internationally and nationally, I think that there is a gap in the Finnish loneliness research that my thesis will help fill. In the next chapter, I will introduce my topic in more detail.

1.2. Aims and objectives

As part of the research continuum, I will ask the three following research questions:

- How often has loneliness been brought up between the years 1980 and 2019 in Finnish governmental documents?

³² Saari 2010 p. 15

³³ Saari 2012 p. 17

³⁴ Saari 2012 p. 35

³⁵ Saari 2015 p. 29

³⁶ Alatupa, Karppinen, Keltikangas-Järvinen and Savioja 2007 p. 142-143

- Which (if any) actor groups and themes can be identified?
- By whom have the actor groups and themes been brought up?
- If there is a change - why?

The perspective of this thesis has not been common in loneliness research. Besides shedding light on how the loneliness discussion has developed during the years, my research will give an understanding of the actor groups that have been brought up most often in the discussion.

However, the value of my research comes from the analysis, which is the main part of my work.

In short, what I am trying to find out in my thesis is whether there is a change in loneliness discourse from the 1980s until the 2010s.

Some events in Finland during the last twenty years have brought media attention to loneliness. School shootings in Jokela in 2007 and Kauhajoki in 2008, and the immigration and radicalism discussion in recent years have affected the way politicians talk about loneliness. In addition, this attention has increased the demand for state and municipal responsibilities in interfering these kinds of issues.³⁷

The question of loneliness is not new, but the point of view has changed in recent years. It is nowadays increasingly a politicized question. Media outlets have regularly brought up lonely people's miserable stories³⁸, but in line with them are also demands for politicians to do something about the issue.³⁹

I view loneliness debate as part of the marginalization debate that has occurred in the media and parliament, and that has forced the Finnish Government to take measures.⁴⁰ The politicization has not happened as a separate phenomenon but has been actively pursued by scholars that have demanded more action.⁴¹ For example Junttila has suggested a Minister for Loneliness to be set up in a similar way as in Britain.⁴²

³⁷ There has been a lot of discussion about the possible security thread of the "lone wolf" attackers, see for example Nykänen & Hujanen 2017

³⁸ Kallionpää 2015

³⁹ Koskinen 2018

⁴⁰ Government's halfway report 2017 and Government's newsletter (Department of communication) 2017

⁴¹ Junttila 2015 p. 10

⁴² Hjelt 2019

2. Research Design

2.1. Theory and philosophy

“One problem in estimating the prevalence of loneliness is that loneliness is not a condition like a broken leg, which one has or one doesn’t have, but nearer to fatigue, a condition that can vary from the barely perceptible to the overwhelming. How much loneliness must one feel for it to be counted?”, wrote Robert Weiss in 1973.⁴³

Loneliness is a concept that almost everyone has some experience of. Yet, it is not easy to give it an exact definition. There are two possible reasons why loneliness is difficult to recognize and treat politically. First, it is hard for outsiders to identify. Junttila, who has been active in writing about child loneliness, defines loneliness as a negative mental state, in which a person experiences anxiety for insufficient human relationships.⁴⁴ This insufficiency can be both qualitative and quantitative.⁴⁵ Saari defines loneliness similarly as an emotion that illustrates insufficiency of social relationships.⁴⁶

Secondly, loneliness can be understood as contradiction between one’s expectations and reality.⁴⁷ There is no rule telling how many relationships is enough: one is happy with only one friend while someone else needs a large group to feel satisfied.⁴⁸ Furthermore, loneliness can be *social* or *emotional*.⁴⁹ Social loneliness is physical outsidership. It is a state where one has no social connections or no people to be with. Emotional loneliness is the feeling that one has no fulfilling relationships, i.e. someone who would really understand them.

To use the classic sociological term, lonely people lack social capital (“social-structural resources”). This all means that although socially constructed, loneliness is a *subjective* feeling. It is a versatile concept and therefore problematic to treat as a political question.⁵⁰

I agree with Saari that although it is a subjective feeling, loneliness is a socio-political issue that links to the institutional structure of the Finnish society, and it can therefore be influenced by social policy.⁵¹ For example Juha Siltala has studied the intertwinement of social structures, cultural traits

⁴³ Weiss 1973 p. 23

⁴⁴ Junttila 2015 p. 13

⁴⁵ Junttila 2015 p. 13

⁴⁶ Saari 2016 p. 10

⁴⁷ Junttila 2015 p. 14

⁴⁸ Although Saari has proved in his survey that those who feel lonely also have fewer social contacts and are less active in social activities Saari 2010 p. 127-128

⁴⁹ Junttila 2015 p. 33, 34

⁵⁰ Saari 2010 p. 15, 93 and Coleman 1990 p. 302

⁵¹ Saari 2010 p. 11, 85

and developmental psychological factors in the emergence of youth marginalization.⁵² It is, however, questionable how much people have collective responsibility over other people's loneliness.⁵³ In addition, loneliness is a class-based issue and therefore related to an income and education level.⁵⁴ Social relationships become an important factor in happiness when the economic standard of living is high enough.⁵⁵ In other words, when people do not have to worry about money, they have time and energy to focus on social relationships.

There are couple of things that I need to point out about researching loneliness. Firstly, I want to make a distinction between loneliness and being alone. As Junttila writes, being alone is physical, but being lonely is "unwanted mental isolation" (*psykkistä erillisyyttä*).⁵⁶ I will focus on the feeling of loneliness, rather than sought-after solitude.

Secondly, I will not look at loneliness through individuals' experiences like is often done in the media. In my study, I take it for granted that loneliness exists and is an issue in the Finnish society, and I will not therefore offer a deeper discussion about the existence or frequency of it. I think that this kind of research is important because loneliness represents a failure of the whole society. To be able to understand the society, it is important to recognize narratives and see what has been talked about, in which context and how it has changed.

The question of responsibility is also important for my study. Peppi Saikku from the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare has studied the division of responsibilities between the municipalities and the state in activating the long-term unemployed in 1995 - 2015.⁵⁷ He recognizes a change in responsibility: In an active labour policy the responsibility lies with the state, and the municipalities have a supportive role. Around 2000 there was a change towards integrated policy, where the state and the municipalities share the responsibility, and the role of the social and health care sector also grew. In the third stage the division of responsibility is unclear but the role of the individuals themselves is higher.⁵⁸

In 1999, Paavo Lipponen's Second Government (1999 - 2003) aimed to tackle marginalization and poverty and took active role in social policy.⁵⁹ Incentive social security system was an important part

⁵² See e.g. Siltala 2013 p. 413 - 422

⁵³ Saari 2010 p. 27

⁵⁴ Taivalsaari, Lea 2020

⁵⁵ Saari 2010 p. 102

⁵⁶ Junttila 2015 p. 19

⁵⁷ Saikku 2018

⁵⁸ Saikku 2018 p. 104, 111

⁵⁹ Saikku 2018 p. 111

of this policy.⁶⁰ During Matti Vanhanen's term of office (2003 - 2007), the Government increased the responsibility of municipalities, and especially the health care sector, in activating unemployed and marginalized.⁶¹ In 2015, the Government of Juha Sipilä (2015 - 2019) focused on activating the unemployed with (economic) sanctions and handled marginalization, welfare and unemployment more as an individual problem.⁶² According to Saikku, the question of unemployment has therefore moved from mere labour question to social policy question (1995 - 2000) and further towards welfare question and individual question (2000 - 2015).⁶³ At the same time, the division of responsibility has become unclear.⁶⁴

Finnish society has changed from 1980s to 2010s, and for example companies are less dependent on national institutions and more dependent on their owners.⁶⁵ In 2007, when Raija Julkunen made her research about welfare responsibility, Finland had become a "competitive society" (*kilpailukyky-yhteiskunta*), which affected the question of responsibility. In her study from 2007 she also mentions Lipponen's First Government (1995) that started the era of change in operating environment.⁶⁶ In the 1990s, the public sector reduced its responsibilities, privatized services and transferred responsibility to municipalities according to a doctrine called New Public Management.⁶⁷ This reform took place not only in Finland, but in all OECD-countries.⁶⁸ Comparative study about the same topic has been made for example by Johannes Kananen.⁶⁹

These are interesting periods from the loneliness discussion point of view, since loneliness is often discussed in relation to marginalization. Saikku's timeline also overlaps with mine. While I focus on loneliness, Saikku's research on how the responsibilities on unemployment and marginalization have changed is important for my study, since they are targets of active social policy.

According to Julkunen, the Nordic concept of wellbeing is sometimes criticized for paying too much attention to economic and social security and not enough to subjective experiences, such as individualism and happiness.⁷⁰

⁶⁰ Saikku 2018 p. 111

⁶¹ Saikku 2018 p. 112

⁶² Saikku 2018 p. 114

⁶³ Saikku 2018 p. 115 - 116

⁶⁴ Saikku 2018 p. 116

⁶⁵ Julkunen 2007 p. 53

⁶⁶ Julkunen 2007 p. 57

⁶⁷ Julkunen 2007 p. 62, 77, 78

⁶⁸ Julkunen 2007 p. 77 Julkunen 2001 p. 11

⁶⁹ Kananen 2014 p. 164-167

⁷⁰ Julkunen 2007 p. 47-48

Still, one can argue that these factors are important for subjective wellbeing as well. In 2007 Julkunen also estimates that holding society responsible for grievances has increased.⁷¹

The question of responsibility in Finnish welfare links to loneliness discussion. What has been talked about in the parliamentary documents reveals what is seen as parliament's responsibility. The parliament does not generally talk about issues that it is not responsible for. Growing interest towards loneliness in the parliamentary documents points in the direction of increase in responsibility. Different political parties have different ideas over individuals' responsibilities, and the question is in constant motion.

2.2. Methodology and methods

There is a considerable amount of studies about loneliness in Finland. However, it has not been common to use quantitative methods in researching loneliness. This is the gap I want to fill. In my thesis I examine *a change* in a narrative. A best way to do this is by mixing qualitative and quantitative methods.

This research consists of two parts. In the first part, I will analyse my data using quantitative content analysis, more specifically categorization. In this part, I will see which actor groups are brought up in the governmental archives i.e. which groups are talked about in the Government between 1980s and 2010s. I have chosen to look at the actor groups because I want to find out who the policies are targeted to. I believe that it reveals which (age) groups are held important in the Government and additionally in the whole society.

There are researchers who believe that quantitative content analysis works best when used together with qualitative methods.⁷² For example Sarah Kaplan, a Professor of Gender and Economy, has advocated for combining qualitative and quantitative methods.⁷³

According to researchers Daniel Riffe, Stephen Lacy and Frederick Fico, there are three general ways to use content analysis:

- to use only content analysis
- to use content analysis with other methods to "explore influences on content"
- to use content analysis with other methods to "explore content effects"⁷⁴

⁷¹ Julkunen 2007 p. 47-48, 61

⁷² Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2014 p. 28

⁷³ Kaplan 2015

⁷⁴ Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2014 p. 33-34

My study belongs to the second one: I am using quantitative content analysis together with qualitative analysis to find out what may have influenced the content. My method of quantitative content analysis is categorization, which is the simplest way to process my data.

The basic idea of quantitative content analysis is that it uses numeric values to help find measured differences, as Riffe, Lacy and Fico write.⁷⁵ In my study, these numeric values are divided into categories to make them controllable.

Advantages of quantitative content analysis are that it is systematic and replicable. Riffe, Lacy and Fico emphasize that the findings of quantitative content analysis must be objective and free from researchers' beliefs or hopes.⁷⁶ In their book *Analyzing media messages - Using quantitative content analysis in research*, they sum it up:

"Definitions and operations that were used must be reported exactly and fully so that readers can understand exactly what was done. That exactness means that other researchers can evaluate the procedure and the findings and, if desired, repeat the operations."⁷⁷

In addition, some critics argue that in quantitative content analysis "what you see is what you get. Also, when using this approach, one has to be careful of the symbols and language that might mean different things to different people and change over time. Quantitative content analysis has also been criticized for example for its tendency to pay too much attention for a single symbol. For me, this means that I have to be extra careful, since I am analysing *a concept*.⁷⁸ Other classical concept research theorists are for example Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck.⁷⁹

In the second part, I will use qualitative methods to analyse my findings. In this part, I am using narrative analysis to see what kind of narratives are linked to my findings, more specifically: in what kind of context they have been brought up. In addition to the context, it is important to note who has brought them up. In a nutshell, I will analyse *which groups* have been brought up, *why* and *by whom*.

Narrative analysis is a sub-category of discourse analysis. Roland Barthes writes:

⁷⁵ Riffe, Lacy, Fico 2014 p. 21

⁷⁶ Riffe, Lacy, Fico 2014 p. 20-21

⁷⁷ Riffe, Lacy, Fico 2014 p. 20

⁷⁸ Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2014 p. 28-29 30

⁷⁹ Skinner 1999 and Koselleck 2002

"It is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of mankind; there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative; all classes, all human groups, have their stories--." ⁸⁰

A narrative - according to a definition favoured by scholars working in the fields of literary studies – is a story that 1) consists of chronological sequence of events, 2) the events are logically connected to each other (there is a "plot") and 3) the relation between the beginning and the end of the story encompasses action or tension.⁸¹ We express our experience of the temporal world with narratives, hence there is a myriad of different kinds of narratives and multiple ways of studying them.⁸²

Although many scholars are hesitant in scrutinizing the hierarchic relation between different narratives, I think that an attempt to locate and study the master narrative regarding loneliness in the Finnish society from 1980s to 2010s is highly important and enables a scrutiny of contemporary social values.⁸³ In addition, mixing quantitative and qualitative methods helps me benefit from both. In the Discussion-chapter, I am creating an interpretation of why certain actor groups stand out in the data.

The basic assumption of both discourse- and narrative analysis is that they are not only part of, but they *construct* social reality instead of only explaining and portraying it.⁸⁴ In addition, context and interaction between participants are important in the analysis.⁸⁵ In other words, the focus is not usually on the speaker, but on the social practice.⁸⁶ According to a Dutch political scientist Maartin Hajer, language was for long seen as a neutral means of conveying the message or describing the world. However, in the postpositivist social sciences, language has been problematized. It has become a way to create the world instead of only describing it.⁸⁷

In one of his main works about acid rains as an environmental problem, Hajer describes how dead trees are not only dead trees, but they have a deeper meaning in a narrative of acid rain.⁸⁸ As I said earlier, I think that in a social policy narrative, loneliness represents a failure of the whole society. To be able to understand a society, is important to recognize these narratives and see which context

⁸⁰ Barthes 1977 p. 237

⁸¹ Jokinen, Juhila, Suoninen 2016 p. 36, 38, 43, see also White 1987

⁸² Hajer 1995 p. 45, Franzosi 2010 p. 12

⁸³ Rigney, Ann 2013 p. 184

⁸⁴ Jokinen, Juhila, Suoninen 2016 p. 17, 26 and Holstein & Gubrium 2016 p. 2

⁸⁵ Jokinen, Juhila, Suoninen 2016 p. 36, 38

⁸⁶ Jokinen, Juhila, Suoninen 2016 p. 43

⁸⁷ Hajer 1993 p. 44

⁸⁸ Hajer 1993 p. 44

they are a part of. Social scientists have often tried to turn words into numbers, when doing a content analysis.⁸⁹ In my thesis, I will turn numbers into narratives.

In the last chapter, I will see what has happened in the wider political environment in Finland and how they might have affected the results. I will pay attention to the timing and socio-political events at that time. I think that they play a role on how the subject is approached.

Therefore, my research methods are as follows:

Quantitative methods:

Categorization

Qualitative methods:

Narrative analysis

2.3. Research data

My research data consists of three parts. The most important data are government proposals from the year 1980 until 2019 that can be found in the Finnish governmental archives.⁹⁰ In search of documents that cover loneliness, I limit the findings by using a search term yksinäi*. Using this cut term, instead of for example yksin (alone), prevents me from getting results concerning for example single households (yksinasuja) or single parents (yksinhuoltaja) that are outside of my research question. The cut word yksinäi* gets 193 hits in the governmental proposal archives.

Although there are 193 government proposals to be considered, there is a fair amount of proposals that are not relevant. The meaning of the word lonely has changed, and especially in the 1980s the lonely referred to unmarried, widowed, and childless people (mostly women) in the Finnish language.⁹¹ In my categorization (see next chapter) I did not count the times that lonely was clearly referring to a civil status.

Besides government proposals, I will examine the expert opinions (150) and debate initiatives (13) to see what has been discussed in the Parliament around the topic of loneliness.

By using three different sets of data, I will cover the topic from three different perspectives. The government proposals offer the governmental perspective. Most of the legislative changes are made through the governmental proposals. After the proposal, the Finnish Parliament discusses the

⁸⁹ Franzosi 2010 p. 33

⁹⁰ Governmental archives can be found in https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/search/Sivut/Vaskiresults.aspx#k=Yksin%C3%A4i*

⁹¹ See for example Government proposal 75/1980

matter and decide which committee it is sent to. The expert opinions link to this part of the preparation of the law. The committee consults experts —that can be researchers, NGO:s, companies, authorities, or people that the law affects.⁹²

Not all Government proposals lead into changes in the legislation. Still, they offer a deeper understanding of what the Government holds important and possibly what has been talked about in the whole society.

The debate initiatives are made by Members of Parliament and they are not part of the law preparation themselves. Still, they bring up what has been talked about in the Parliament and what are the topics that individual members think are important.⁹³ In addition, debate initiatives offer information about which parties have been active in bringing up the issue. The research could be extended by using other documents in the archives. For example, the speeches in the parliament or interrogatories could bring different stances to the question.

In the debate initiatives (13) there were two documents and in the expert opinions (150) there were thirteen documents that existed in the data twice. They were similar not only in their content but also in their code number. In my categorization, I have not considered those documents that exist in my data more than once to be precise in my findings. So, the real number of my data is in practice smaller than the exact number of the data.

My data are government proposals, expert opinions, and debate initiatives. I believe that by using these types of documents, I will get an understanding of what has been brought up in the Finnish Parliament and get a wider view than by using only government proposals. However, it is obvious that since there are 193 government proposals, 150 experts' opinions and only fourteen debate initiatives, the former have more weight in the data. Therefore, the role of the experts' opinions and debate initiatives is more of a supportive one.

My research focus is on the documented discourse expressed in the debates of the Parliament. It is relevant to note that these documents show only small amount of work that is done in the parliament and bring only certain viewpoints to the spotlight. Since the documents are only available in Finnish, I will offer as close translations as possible, and let the reader know when I have translated sentences myself.

⁹² Parliament webpage: Hallituksen esitykset, Parliament webpage: Lakien säätäminen eduskunnassa, Sajari 2020

⁹³ Parliament Webpage: Kansanedustajien keskustelualoitteet

3. Analytical Process

3.1. Categorization of the data

I read all the data and categorized it. After this process, I could categorize my findings in two sections according to what is loneliness linked to in the data. The sections are *actor groups* that emerge in the data and *themes* that emerge in the data (see the table below). I have done the categorization according to what emerges in the data most often. In other words, I looked for the context of the word lonely (yksinäi*) and what it refers to in the document. Therefore, I do understand that the same data could be used to look for something different.

In the table below I have listed the exact number of cases when certain themes have emerged in the data. I think that it is worth noticing that dividing the findings into actor groups and themes is my personal decision. One could argue that actor groups are also themes, and vice versa, so that this partition is made only to make things simpler.

I will take a deeper look into my findings in the next chapter.

Table 1

DATA	GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS 193	EXPERT OPINIONS 150 (137)	DEBATE INITIATIVES 13 (9)
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENT	7	31	1
IMMIGRANT BACKGROUND OR BORN ABROAD	1	6	-
ELDERLY	2	18	3
RADICALISM (INC. LONE WOLVES)	-	16	-
POVERTY	-	2	2
MARGINALIZATION AND INEQUALITY	1	19	1
SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE (INC. EUTHANASY DISCUSSION)	4	14	-
PENITENTIARY	17	-	-

3.1.1 Categorizing actor groups in the data

As table 1 shows, children, old, and people with immigrant background are actor groups that emerge in the data most often. In this chapter I will offer further categorizations and see in which times and by whom the actor groups have been discussed.

Table 2

CHILDREN IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	7	2003 - 2018
Expert opinions	31	2016 - 2019
Debate initiatives	1	2000
	= 39	

Table 3

IMMIGRANTS IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	1	2018
Expert opinions	6	2016-2018
Debate initiatives	-	-
	= 7	

Table 4

OLD PEOPLE IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	2	2010 - 2012
Expert opinions	18	2015 - 2018
Debate initiatives	3	2000 - 2007
	= 23	

As is shown in the tables 2, 3 and 4, the most often referred actor group in the data are children (39 mentions), and after that, old people (23 mentions). This is not surprising, since these are groups that are also been talked about in the media. What is striking is that loneliness of all actor groups is mostly talked about after the year 2015. Especially in the expert opinions, loneliness has been brought up regularly after the year 2015. Only in debate initiatives are there mentions between the year 2000 and 2007.

3.1.2. Categorizing themes in the data

Radicalism, poverty, marginalization or inequality, health care and penitentiary are themes that emerge in the data most often. In this chapter I will offer further categorizations and see that in which times the themes have been discussed.

Table 5

RADICALISM IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	-	-
Expert opinions	16	2016 - 2018
Debate initiatives	-	-
	= 16	

Table 6

POVERTY IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	-	-
Expert opinions	1	2017
Debate initiatives	2	2004
	= 3	

Table 7

MARGINALIZATION OR INEQUALITY	Amount	Years
Government proposals	1	2001
Expert opinions	17	2016 - 2019
Debate initiatives	1	2017
	= 19	

Table 8

HEALTH CARE IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	4	2001 - 2017
Expert opinions	14	2016 - 2018
Debate initiatives	-	-
	= 18	

Table 9

PENITENTIARY IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	16	1985 - 2015
Expert opinions	-	-
Debate initiatives	-	-
	= 16	

Themes that are most often mentioned in the loneliness discussion in my data are radicalism, poverty, marginalization or inequality, health care and penitentiary. Of these, marginalization, or inequality (19 times) and health care (18 times) are mentioned almost as often. Marginalization is mentioned almost only after the year 2016. Discussion about loneliness and health care is also weighted after the year 2016.

Serving a prison sentence (penitentiary), is also brought up often in my data. It is the only theme that is discussed before the year 2000. It is only mentioned in the government proposals, and the first mention is from the year 1985.

3.2. Discourse Analysis of the data

This is the part where I shift from quantitative methods to qualitative methods, to analyse my raw data and see who has brought up the actor groups and themes in the data and why. I will also take a closer look into which years have the actor groups and themes been brought up.

3.2.1. How and by whom are the actor groups brought up in the data?

Table 10

CHILDREN IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	7	2003 - 2018
Expert opinions	31	2016 - 2019
Debate initiatives	1	2000
	= 39	

Children and adolescent are groups most often referred to in the data. This means, that children and adolescent loneliness has been talked about in the parliament often. However, the first time children or adolescent loneliness is brought up is in 2000, which means that the discussion is relatively recent. Most of the conversation has occurred in the 2010s.

Children or adolescent are mentioned in the government proposals seven times, in the expert opinions thirty-one times and in debate initiatives once.

Lonely children and adolescent are mentioned in the expert opinions first time in 2016. The Central Union for Child Welfare (Lastensuojelun keskusliitto) expresses its opinion about immigrant family reunion and voices their worry about loneliness of those children that have arrived in the country without a family.⁹⁴ After 2016, children and youth emerge in the data regularly.

Instead, in the government proposals, child loneliness is brought up twice already in 2003. Both proposals are related to children's lonely afterschool time, that the Government tries to cut by increasing parents' flexible working hours and reforming afterschool activities.⁹⁵ In addition to this, there are two other mentions of lonely children before 2018: in 2004 and in 2006.⁹⁶ The former is a proposal about reforming the child welfare law. In it the Government suggests that using a solitary

⁹⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-63346

⁹⁵ Government proposals 22/2003 and 57/2003

⁹⁶ Government proposals 225/2004 and 124/2006

confinement ('yksinäisyysshuone' in the document) as a restrictive measure for children that are taken into custody should be limited, because it is harmful.⁹⁷

When looking at the data on child loneliness, it seems that on a political level, a common view that loneliness is harmful for children starts to emerge in the beginning of the century. In 2010 loneliness discussion widens from children to youth, when the Government proposes a new Youth Act ('nuorisolaki') proposing that public services addressed to young people have to be strengthened.⁹⁸ In this proposal, the Government points out that loneliness and lack of friends mean that more support among adolescent is needed.⁹⁹

However, although child loneliness has entered the political agenda already in the beginning of the century, it has become a lot more discussed after 2015. The Youth Act is mentioned again in 2016, when the Government is, again, worried about loneliness that is common among young people, and therefore wants to increase the feeling of community.¹⁰⁰ Last time child loneliness is mentioned in the government proposals is in 2018 in a proposal about electric processing of customer data ('asiakastietojen sähköinen käsittely').¹⁰¹ In the proposal, the Government remarks that a possibility for processing without facial contact is important for example for lonely children or those with difficult conditions at home.¹⁰²

Child loneliness is mentioned in expert opinions altogether 31 times between 1980 and 2019. However, the earliest mention is not until 2016 when an organization called Back to Life ('Takaisin Elämään ry') is worried about underaged persons that do not have a feeling of belonging.¹⁰³ This, according to them, leads into marginalization and increase in substance abuse.¹⁰⁴ Similar kind of worries are expressed in various expert opinions in 2017 from Ohjaamo (an NGO that offers guidance for persons under thirty years of age), group of professors in social sciences, the Finnish Youth Psychiatric Organization (Suomen nuorisopsykiatrisen yhdistys ry), the Martha Organization, the Finland Futures Research Centre and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.¹⁰⁵

In 2017, the worry about youth loneliness and marginalization is broadened. For example, the Central Organization for Unemployed, that aim to ban zero-hour contracts, argue that loneliness

⁹⁷ Government proposal 225/2004 p. 52, 56

⁹⁸ Government proposal 111/2010 p. 1, 56

⁹⁹ Government proposal 111/2010 p. 1

¹⁰⁰ Government proposal 111/2016 p. 1, 22

¹⁰¹ Government proposal 300/2018 p. 41

¹⁰² Government proposal 300/2018 p. 41

¹⁰³ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-91287 p.1

¹⁰⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-91287 p.1

¹⁰⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-130172, EDK-2017-AK-122017, EDK-2017-AK-144291, EDK-2017-AK-157112, EDK-2017-AK-163975 and EDK-2017-AK-119426

may be the key experience of working life for Generation Y (born in 1980s and 1990s).¹⁰⁶ In the next year, an organization for families of transgender children and youth (translasten ja nuorten perheet ry) raise their worry about loneliness among transgendered children.¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, in the debate initiatives, the only time that children and adolescent loneliness is mentioned is in 2000 when the MP of the Coalition party, Sari Sarkomaa brings up possible difficulties in coordinating work and family life and the impacts of parents' demanding work life on children.¹⁰⁸

Overall, it seems that many non-governmental organizations legitimize their existence and justify their needs for funding by saying that they increase communality and therefore work against youth loneliness. For example, the aforementioned Back to life -organization asks for funding (500 000€) by saying that their project increases the feeling of community among youth.¹⁰⁹ Another example is an organization for Christian kindergartens and schools, that justifies their allowance (200 000€) for club activities by similar means: saying that they encourage communal spirit and prevent loneliness.¹¹⁰ However, this justification does not only go for youth organizations. The National Sports Council (Valtion liikuntaneuvosto) notes that physical exercise helps making friends and preventing loneliness, and therefore the state authorities should direct funding to actions promoting physical exercise.¹¹¹

Therefore, preventing loneliness is used for justifying the work of various organizations. From 2010 onwards, loneliness is commonly perceived as something that should be prevented and granted funding for, and it is highly unlikely that anyone would question its importance.

Secondly, in the media, youth radicalism discussion has often referred to loneliness.¹¹² Still, of all 39 documents in my data, only one refers to youth radicalism. In May 2017 a group of researchers gave a written statement to the Committee for the Future (tulevaisuusvaliokunta) in relation to sustainable welfare.¹¹³ In it, the researchers emphasize the importance of collective activities in preventing loneliness and radicalism.¹¹⁴ This is the only time that children and youth loneliness and radicalism are linked together in the documents.

¹⁰⁶ EDK-2017-AK-103447 p.2

¹⁰⁷ EDK-2018-AK-175819

¹⁰⁸ Debate initiative Sari Sarkomaa 7/2000

¹⁰⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-91287 p. 2

¹¹⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-89998 p. 1

¹¹¹ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-148872 p. 1

¹¹² See for example Upola 2014

¹¹³ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-122017

¹¹⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-122017 p. 1

In conclusion, it seems that the possible radicalization of lonely adolescent is more discussed in the media than in the decision-making.

Table 11

IMMIGRANTS IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	1	2018
Expert opinions	6	2016-2018
Debate initiatives	-	-
	= 7	

Refugees became a frequent topic in the Finnish media in 2015 when it started to notify so-called refugee crisis, that brought about 32 000 refugees to Finland.¹¹⁵ New situation meant that the policymakers started to pay attention to incoming refugees. This is also visible in the loneliness-discussion in the parliament.

What comes to immigration, there is often confusion about terminology. According to EU's definition, an immigrant is "a non-resident arriving in a State with the intention to remain for a period exceeding a year" (global context) or "a person who establishes their usual residence in the territory of an EU Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 23 months, having previously been usually resident in another EU Member State or a third country" (EU context).¹¹⁶ Therefore, the term immigrant includes employees and exchange students as well as refugees.

However, since this thesis is interested in the amount of mentions, I will count all the times that immigrants and loneliness are linked in the data. Therefore, I will take it as a premise that the terminology in the data is correct. Therefore, people with immigrant background (so-called second-generation immigrant) are also included.

¹¹⁵ Rautio and Juutilainen 2015

¹¹⁶ European Commission, Migration and Home Affairs

Immigrants or immigrant background emerge in the data seven times: once in government proposal and six times in expert opinions. All the cases when loneliness is related to immigration has taken place between 2016 and 2018.

In government proposals, there is only one mention of loneliness when it comes to immigration. In 2018 the Government proposes a law of promoting the integration ('laki kotouttamisen edistämisestä').¹¹⁷ In it, the Government concludes that loneliness experiences of immigrants vary depending on one's ethnic background. However, the data about which ethnic groups are most lonely is difficult to find, and it is not found in the original source from the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare (Terveystieteiden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos, THL).¹¹⁸ However, according to the government proposal, almost every third immigrant boy feels that they do not have any close friends.¹¹⁹

In expert opinions, immigrants are mentioned more often: altogether in six documents. Two of them are from 2016, one from 2017 and three from 2018. First is about tightening the standards of family reunification, that caused a lot of attention in the Finnish media in 2016.¹²⁰ In it, the Central Union for Child Welfare (Lastensuojelun keskusliitto) criticises the decision to tighten the rules of family reunification.¹²¹ They argue that loneliness of children that arrive in the country alone is a risk for their well-being.¹²² Also, they bring up risks for radicalization of lonely (young) men.¹²³ The Central Union for Child Welfare voice their worry about lonely immigrant children and men also in two other hearings in 2016 and 2018.¹²⁴ In the latter, they bring up that bullying and outsidership from the class community is common among immigrant children.¹²⁵

Fourth time that loneliness is linked to immigration in expert opinion is in March 2017 when the Statistics Finland (Tilastokeskus) gives a statement with a headline "Integration, Immigrants".¹²⁶ In it, there is a mention that every fifth child with a refugee background feels lonely and that they have less Finnish friends than other children with immigration background.¹²⁷ Worries about loneliness and bullying are brought up again in October 2018 when a special adviser of the Ministry of

¹¹⁷ Government proposal 96/2018

¹¹⁸ Terveystieteiden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2017

¹¹⁹ Government proposal 96/2018 p. 52

¹²⁰ E.g. Kankkonen 2016

¹²¹ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-63346

¹²² Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-63346 p. 2, 8

¹²³ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-63346 p. 2, 8

¹²⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-90515 p. 1, 3 and EDK-2018-AK-175117

¹²⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-175117 p. 3

¹²⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-111740

¹²⁷ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-111740 p. 4

Employment and the Economy gives a comment on challenges in integration.¹²⁸ In addition, during the same month, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto) comments on challenges in child welfare.¹²⁹ They are also worried about frequency of discrimination and loneliness among those children that are born abroad.¹³⁰ Like the Central Union of Child Welfare, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare also mentions the outsidersness from the class community, that is common among children with immigrant background.¹³¹

Table 12

OLD AGE IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	2	2010 - 2012
Expert opinions	18	2015 - 2018
Debate initiatives	3	2000 - 2007
	= 23	

Besides children, elderly people are the group that emerge in the data most often. They are mentioned in the government proposals twice (in 2010 and 2012), in the debate initiatives three times (2000, 2005, 2007) and in the expert opinion eighteen times (between 2015 and 2018). (See table above)

Both government proposals that mention old age loneliness are linked to social- and health care. In a proposal 90/2010 the Government suggested a reform to health care law, in which they argue that widowed, lonely, those that are returned from a hospital and demented belong to a risk group that needs more support.¹³² The Government renews this argument about risk groups that need more support in 2012, when it proposes a law about supporting elderly people's ability to function and about their social and health care services.¹³³

In expert opinions, old age loneliness is brought up more often, altogether eighteen times, starting from the year 2015, when the Family Care Association ('Perhehoitoliitto') comments on the

¹²⁸ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-216301 p. 8

¹²⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-211242

¹³⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-211242 p. 1

¹³¹ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-211242 p. 1

¹³² Government proposal 90/2010 p. 112

¹³³ Government proposal 160/2012 p 40

Government's budget proposal for the year 2016.¹³⁴ In it, they justify the importance of their work and say that especially defenceless and lonely elderly people who have dementia are the ones who need long-term family care.¹³⁵ The other expert opinion document from the same year that mentions old age loneliness is from the Association for Home Owners ('omakotiliitto') that appeal to the Government to cancel energy tax raise.¹³⁶ One of their arguments is that the raise hits hardest for the lonely old people who live in a detached house.¹³⁷ As we see from these, the focus in these documents is not in old age loneliness per se, but loneliness has been used as a tool to support an argument.

In 2016, four expert opinions mention old age and loneliness. Once more, the Family Care Association has given a statement to the Social Affairs and Health Committee about the reform of the private care law that it supports, and its argument is similar than in the previous year.¹³⁸ In October 2016, the Finnish department of the International Christian Embassy of Jerusalem, comments on the state budget proposal for the year 2017, where they justify their functioning by saying that they help Israeli elderly, many of which are lonely and ill.¹³⁹

Lonely elderly people are in the centre of two documents from 2016. First is an experts' opinion by the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare ('TEHY') in November 2016.¹⁴⁰ They are worried about elderly people's ability to function, and they mention lonely elderly with dementia as a group that needs support.¹⁴¹ The second is related to social and health care. The Centre of Expertise in Social Work of Eastern Finland ('Itä-Suomen sosiaalialan osaamiskeskus, ISO') comments on the government's proposal on reforming the Health- and Social Care Law.¹⁴² According to ISO, projects carried out in public health care services have revealed that loneliness is among those problems that cause crisis in adult- and elderly life.¹⁴³

In 2017, old age loneliness is mentioned in expert opinions seven times. Two of them are from the Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older People ('Vanhustyön keskusliitto or VTKL'), which indicates that the welfare of elderly has in general reached attention during this governmental period. First of them is from April 2017, when in their statement for the Social Affairs and Health

¹³⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2015-AK-19107

¹³⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2015-AK-19107 p. 1

¹³⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2015-AK-22678

¹³⁷ Expert opinion EDK-2015-AK-22678 p. 2

¹³⁸ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-61765 p. 1

¹³⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-85272 p. 1

¹⁴⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-88035

¹⁴¹ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-88035 p. 2

¹⁴² Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-93864

¹⁴³ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-93864 p. 3

Committee about the social- and health care reform, the VTKL says that preventing old age loneliness is essential for elderly's independent performance and use of service.¹⁴⁴ In October the same year, the VTKL comments on another law reform on alcohol law, and states that loneliness is a central reason for old people's alcohol consumption.¹⁴⁵ In addition, in November 2017, a researcher Erkki Sutinen comments on changes in today's work life, and mentions in it that the amount of lonely old people is increasing.¹⁴⁶

In addition to these two, in 2017 the Counsellor of Social Welfare in-chief ('ylisosaalineuvos') Aulikki Kanaoja gives a statement to the Social Affairs and Health Committee again about the social and health care reform.¹⁴⁷ According to her, insecurity of lonely elderly people and decrease in social contacts are a growing problem in social welfare services.¹⁴⁸ The Labour Institute for Economic Research ('palkansaajien tutkimuslaitos') brings an economic perspective into picture. It comments on government's law reform on Pension Act and says that economic problems of lonely older women are especially big.¹⁴⁹ In this, the 'lonely' apparently refers to women who are widowed, divorced or unmarried, and not to those who consider themselves lonely.

There are in addition two statements from the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) in 2017, and they are both connected to the UN's Agenda2030-project that aims to increase sustainable welfare. In the first experts' opinion the THL brings up old age loneliness as a challenge for sustainable welfare.¹⁵⁰ In the second one they comment on the Government's project on furthering the sustainable welfare.¹⁵¹ In it they bring up worries about old age loneliness for those who live alone and bring up the importance of social services for them.¹⁵²

In conclusion, in 2017 the old age loneliness is brought up multiple times from different perspectives, of which two of them are from social- and health care perspective.

In 2018, the old age loneliness is mentioned four times in the documents. In two consecutive days in May, the city of Tampere and Valli – The Finnish Union for Senior Services give their opinions on the government proposal about social and health care reform. In their statement, the city of Tampere is worried that the freedom of choice in the social and health care reform might treat lonely disabled

¹⁴⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-117948 p. 2

¹⁴⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-159146 p. 1-2

¹⁴⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-159171 p. 3

¹⁴⁷ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-127533

¹⁴⁸ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-127533 p. 3

¹⁴⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-107034 p. 1-2

¹⁵⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-121359 p. 3

¹⁵¹ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-122853

¹⁵² Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-122853 p. 3

or old people unequally.¹⁵³ The similar argument can be found in the comment of Valli, that also brings up the flaws in the freedom of choice in the social and health care reform.¹⁵⁴ They argue that freedom of choice effects on old people's lives exceptionally, because they are often: "--both low income, in need of a lot of support, outside of digital services and feel their life lonely and unsafe--" (my translation).¹⁵⁵

A different view of old people loneliness is given in a report offered by the WEALL-research consortium with a title "Solutions to changes in work life" ('ratkaisuja työn murrokseen').¹⁵⁶ The researchers bring up the term "bridge work" ('siltatyö') that means that retirement does not happen suddenly but gradually (for example with part-time work). Bridge work would help organizations take advantage of the silent knowledge, and on the other hand prevent loneliness and marginalization of the people who are retiring.¹⁵⁷ In addition, in April 2018 a researcher Hannu Rossilahti gives a report to the Government about social and cooperative living.¹⁵⁸ According to him, the model of sharing economy strengthens when loneliness in the society increases.¹⁵⁹ He also criticises home care for the elderly and says that it does not remove the problem of old age loneliness.¹⁶⁰

In debate initiatives, the old people loneliness is brought up in three different cases: in 2000, 2005 and 2007. In 2005 altogether 31 representatives¹⁶¹ from eight different political party (and Tapani Tölli from Centre Party as a leading figure) made a proposal called "Maintaining and developing old people's welfare" ('Ikäihmisten hyvinvoinnin turvaaminen ja kehittäminen') where they argue that loneliness and insecurity are problems for old people and that these problems reflect instantly on health.¹⁶² Two years later, a Social Democrat Anneli Kiljunen and 57 other representatives¹⁶³ from seven different political party (the Green Alliance was missing) renewed the earlier proposal for

¹⁵³ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-190138 p. 2

¹⁵⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-190459

¹⁵⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-190459 p. 1

¹⁵⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-228855

¹⁵⁷ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-228855 p. 5

¹⁵⁸ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-179827

¹⁵⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-179827 p. 11

¹⁶⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-179827 p. 27

¹⁶¹ 31 MP's from following political parties: Centre Party: 9 MPs, National Coalition Party and SDP: 6 MPs, Left Alliance: 3 MPs, True Finns and Christian Democrats: 2 MPs, Green League: 1 MP

¹⁶² Debate initiative 6/2005 Tapani Tölli etc.

¹⁶³ 58 MP's from following political parties: Social Democrats: 32 MPs, Left Alliance: 7 MPs, Christian Democrats and National Coalition 5 MPs, Centre Party 4 MPs and True Finns 3 MPs

debate with almost exactly the same wording.¹⁶⁴ Both proposals were later lapsed, i.e. they did not lead into actions.

In 2000, a Social Democratic representative Ilkka Taipale issued a debate initiative about old age loneliness. The headline of the initiative is “Improving the position of lonely people” (‘yksinäisen ihmisten aseman parantaminen’).¹⁶⁵

What makes this initiative interesting for my research is that although in it the lonely pensioners are mentioned as one group, the initiative itself is the only one that brings up loneliness itself as a problem in the society. Taipale does not deal loneliness as a side effect of something (such as immigration or poverty) i.e. through something else, and he does not treat it as a problem of a certain group or a situation in life. It is the only debate initiative that has loneliness as its very core, which is revealed by the aforementioned headline. Taipale argues that there are no policies created in order to improve the conditions of lonely people and demands for both civil discussion and activity.¹⁶⁶ In his proposal, Taipale refers to a notorious case where a body of a lonely man had lied in an apartment six years without anyone noticing (so-called “Maunula-mummy -case”).¹⁶⁷ The case was reported in the media widely, which undoubtedly aroused discussion about loneliness in the society.¹⁶⁸

In the media, loneliness among elderly has been widely discussed during recent years. There are multiple non-governmental organizations that offer help to older people who feel lonely. For example, Helsinki Missio, an NGO that fights the loneliness in Finland, started its work in 2000 with lonely seniors as their target group.¹⁶⁹ Other examples are The Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older People (Vanhustyön keskusliitto) and Mieli – Mental Health Finland -organization. Considering the frequency of lonely old people in the media, it is not surprising that this group is brought up often in the parliamentary discussions, especially from the expert opinions.

According to Uotila, on one hand, the public picture of old people’s loneliness is often one-sided and dramatic, and society’s attitudes and notions affect the subjective feelings of loneliness.¹⁷⁰ However, not all the seniors are lonely, but it is a common way to see elderly.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, according

¹⁶⁴ Debate initiative 4/2007 Anneli Kiljunen etc.

¹⁶⁵ Debate initiative 8/2000 Ilkka Taipale

¹⁶⁶ Debate initiative 8/2000 Ilkka Taipale p. 1

¹⁶⁷ Debate initiative 8/2000 Ilkka Taipale p. 1

¹⁶⁸ e.g. Turunen 2018 and Tiippana 2018

¹⁶⁹ Valtonen 2017

¹⁷⁰ Uotila 2011 p. 13, 14

¹⁷¹ Uotila 2011 p. 24

to Uotila, old age loneliness research has focused mainly on the background variables behind loneliness.¹⁷² Additionally, elderly people's coverage in the media has changed into more positive direction.¹⁷³ Still, elderly people themselves have, when interviewed, brought up the society's negative attitudes towards them.¹⁷⁴ I think that this media discussion is one reason why old age loneliness is mentioned in the data strikingly often.

3.2.2. How and by whom are the themes brought up in the data?

Table 13

RADICALISM (INC. LONE WOLVES) IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	-	-
Expert opinions	16	2016 - 2018
Debate initiatives	-	-
	= 16	

In the data, lone wolves are talked about from the perspective of authorities, such as the police department. A so-called lone wolf is a person who works independently. While still in my data (until the year 2019) the term lone wolf is widely used, the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service (Supo) uses the term *lone operator* in its National Security Review.¹⁷⁵ According to Supo, the biggest terrorist threat comes from small groups or lone operators support either radical Islamist or extreme right-wing ideology.¹⁷⁶

According to an American psychiatrist researches Carlo Lazzari, Abdul Nusair and Marco Rabottini, a lone wolf is a "self-radicalized, has not contacts with other extremist groups, plans a terrorist attack with inspiration from other persons or organizations, and has no support for planning and executing

¹⁷² Uotila 2011 p. 22

¹⁷³ Uotila 2011 p. 35, 36

¹⁷⁴ Uotila 2011 p. 50

¹⁷⁵ Finnish Security and Intelligence Service: the National Security Review

¹⁷⁶ Finnish Security and Intelligence Service: the National Security Review p. 3

a violent act.”¹⁷⁷ In the Finnish media, lone wolves are mentioned often in relation to terrorism or national security.¹⁷⁸

In expert opinions, lone wolves are mentioned altogether 16 times between 2016 and 2018. In 2016 there are eight mentions, in 2017 three mentions and 2018 five mentions of lone wolves. Although lone wolves are actively discussed in the experts’ hearings, there are no mentions about them in government proposals or debate initiatives in my data. Most of the times that lone wolves emerge in the documents, it is brought up by the police authorities.

Of eight times that lone wolves are mentioned in 2016, four are in reports of the National Bureau of Investigation (‘Keskusrikospoliisi KRP’)¹⁷⁹, one is a comment from former Chief Director of the Police Force Mikko Paatero¹⁸⁰, two of them comments from Ministry of Justice¹⁸¹ and one from Ministry of Interior¹⁸².

In 2016, the National Bureau of Investigation was asked to comment on the state budget plans on four different occasions. Their comments include the same message: lone wolves form a concrete, serious threat to the society.¹⁸³ Also, a former Chief Director of the Police Force Mikko Paatero says that lone wolves, as well as cyber criminality, extremist organizations and terrorism, are a new security threat in our society.¹⁸⁴ Preventing terrorism is also in the centre of two documents of Ministry of Justice in November 2016. In them, they mention the threat by lone wolves.¹⁸⁵ Ministry of Interior has also published an expert report with a headline “Extremism, radicalism and so-called lone wolves”.¹⁸⁶

In 2017, lone wolves are mentioned three times: twice by the National Bureau of Investigation¹⁸⁷ and once by the parliament’s Administration and Security Division (‘hallinto- ja turvallisuusjaosto’)¹⁸⁸. The National Bureau of Investigation has again been asked to comment on the state budget plans (in May and in October) in 2016. Both documents state, again, that lone wolves

¹⁷⁷ Lazzari, Nusair, Rabottini 2019 p. 58

¹⁷⁸ See e.g. Similä 2017

¹⁷⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-75561, EDK-2016-AK-78619 and EDK-2016-AK-97107

¹⁸⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-77894

¹⁸¹ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-90669 and EDK-2016-AK-91904

¹⁸² Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-75703

¹⁸³ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-75561 p. 5, EDK-2016-AK-78619 p. 7 and EDK-2016-AK-97107 p. 7 and EDK-2016-AK-76347

¹⁸⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-77894 p. 1

¹⁸⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-90669 p. 5 and EDK-2016-AK-91904 p 5

¹⁸⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-75703

¹⁸⁷ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-124946 and EDK-2017-AK-143759

¹⁸⁸ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-141688

are a concrete, serious threat to the society.¹⁸⁹ Later document also says that preventing this kind of threat requires significant resources.¹⁹⁰ Similar argument is provided by parliament's Administration and Security Division.¹⁹¹

Lone wolves are discussed regularly again in 2018, when they are mentioned in the expert opinions five times. Two of the mentions are again from National Bureau of Investigation¹⁹², one from a researcher Teemu Tammikko from the Finnish Institute of International Affairs ('Ulkopoliittinen instituutti')¹⁹³, one from a researcher Martin Scheinin from the European University Institute¹⁹⁴ and one from the Parliamentary Ombudsman¹⁹⁵.

The National Bureau of Investigation comments on the government's budgetary estimate twice, when it gives an opinion about government's EU-influencing strategy ('EU:n vaikuttamisstrategia') and reforming the Firearms Act.¹⁹⁶ These two documents are about two different themes, but include the same message: how to prevent threat created by lone wolves. According to KRP, the threat induced by lone wolves must be evaluated and that the availability of the certain types of dangerous firearms, that are usually used in mass shootings, must be restricted.¹⁹⁷

The office of parliamentary ombudsman comments on the Firearms Act and demands better monitoring on dangerous firearms and their storage.¹⁹⁸ In the document the ombudsman agrees with police government, that the risk of lone wolves or individuals feeling so-called 'white rage' passing the screening process, is bigger than the justification of those who use firearms as a leisure time hobby.¹⁹⁹

On two different occasions in 2018, lone wolves are mentioned in reports given by individual scholars. Teemu Tammikko from Finnish Institute of International Affairs comments on terrorism in Europe. According to him, violent jihadism and lone wolf attacks are the most dangerous forms of terrorism in Europe and the casualties from these attacks are on the rise.²⁰⁰ However, according to Tammikko, most of the offenders tell someone about their plans or talk about it in the social media,

¹⁸⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-124946 p. 4 and EDK-2017-AK-143759 p. 3

¹⁹⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-143759 p. 3

¹⁹¹ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-141688 p. 11

¹⁹² Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-76347, EDK-2018-AK-170303 and EDK-2018-AK-223822

¹⁹³ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-175307

¹⁹⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-217290

¹⁹⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-230968

¹⁹⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-170303 and EDK-2018-AK-223822

¹⁹⁷ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-170303 p. 2 and Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-223822 p. 1

¹⁹⁸ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-230968 p. 1

¹⁹⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2018-230968 p. 3

²⁰⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-175307 p. 1

in which case the effective scouting helps prevent the crimes.²⁰¹ Professor Martin Scheinin from the European University Institute, on the other hand criticises parliament's proposal for the Military Intelligence Act ('sotilastiedustelulaki').²⁰² Scheinin uses 'lone wolves' inspired by ISIS as an example on why surveillance that crosses Finnish borders is not as effective as surveillance inside the borders.²⁰³

In the data about lone wolves (altogether 16 hits), radicalism is mentioned in twelve. In addition, as I mentioned in the earlier chapters, radicalization process is linked to loneliness once when it comes to child or adolescent loneliness (2017)²⁰⁴ and twice when it comes to immigration loneliness (2016 and 2018)²⁰⁵. There are no mentions about radicalism when it comes to old age loneliness.

All in all, it's noticeable that from 2016 onwards, the authorities' worry about 'lone wolves' has increased, although the mass shootings committed by lone wolves in Finland took place already in 2007 and 2008. One reason might be the growing worry about radicalism in the media. For example, in September 2018 Yle News posted an article with a headline: "How to identify a terrorist" ('Tästä tunnistaa terroristin').²⁰⁶ In it they argue that it is difficult it is to recognize a terrorist, but they also note that violent extremism has been talked about a lot in Western countries lately.²⁰⁷ In the article the aforementioned researcher Tammikko comments that of so-called lone wolves, actually about 70 percent has been somewhat networked.²⁰⁸

While the interest towards radicalization increased in the media, the Ministry of Interior stated that radicalized individuals have to be taken among services.²⁰⁹ This statement from the Ministry is based on recommendation of Safety Investigation Authority's report on Turku attacks.²¹⁰ This reveals that radicalism got more media attention after violent attack took place, which in turn forced the authorities to pay attention.

²⁰¹ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-175307 p. 1

²⁰² Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-217290

²⁰³ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-217290 p. 10

²⁰⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-122017

²⁰⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-63346 and government proposal 96/2018 p. 22

²⁰⁶ Uusivirta and Palmén-Väisänen 2019

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ministry of Interior News 2019

²¹⁰ Ibid.

Marginalization does not itself lead into violent extremism.²¹¹ Still, my research reveals that the parliamentary authorities started discussing the harmfulness of loneliness when it became linked to people's safety. In addition, I see the discussion of firearm availability as a result of this worry.

Table 14

POVERTY IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	-	-
Expert opinions	1	2017
Debate initiatives	2	2004
	= 3	

The notion that loneliness and socio-economic position go hand in hand is not new. Already in the 1970s, Robert Weiss found out that “--those who were poor were especially likely to be lonely”²¹²

According to the Statistics Finland, 16,4 per cent (890 000) of Finnish people were “at the risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2017”.²¹³ What is relevant for my research is that although research has proved that loneliness is a class-based issue and therefore related to an income level, there are no mentions about poverty and loneliness in government proposals.²¹⁴

In my data, loneliness and poverty are talked about in three documents: once in expert opinions and twice in debate initiatives. These findings take place in 2017 (in expert opinions) and in 2004 (debate initiatives). In the debate initiatives, the similar argument is brought up twice in 2004 by various members of parliament. First, in March 2004, eight members of parliament (one from each party) demands that the parliament discusses ways to eliminate poverty.²¹⁵ In it, they note that an unreasonably large part of those who live on income support are lonely men.²¹⁶ However, by lonely men they refer to men that are unmarried, divorced or living alone. Similar demand is expressed again in December 2004 by the same eight members of parliament.²¹⁷

²¹¹ Uusivirta and Palmén-Väisänen 2019

²¹² Weiss 1973 p. 26

²¹³ Statistic Finland 2019

²¹⁴ Taivalsaari, Lea 2020

²¹⁵ Debate initiative 9/2004 all parties

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Debate initiative 14/2004 all parties

In expert opinions, loneliness and poverty are linked together once. Researchers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's Food2030 project in the government give a statement about reducing food waste in Finland.²¹⁸ In it they note that the need to food help, poverty and loneliness are all growing in Finland.²¹⁹ The Common Table -project ('yhteinen pöytä' -projekti) helps not only to reduce waste but to improve communality.²²⁰

Table 15

MARGINALIZATION OR INEQUALITY	Amount	Years
Government proposals	1	2001
Expert opinions	17	2016 - 2019
Debate initiatives	1	2017
	= 19	

Marginalization or inequality are mentioned in the data altogether nineteen times. Of these, seventeen are from expert opinions, one from debate initiatives and one from government proposals. I have bundled up marginalization and inequality, because in my data they are often mentioned together. In addition, they are often also linked together in the media. Especially marginalization of men has been talked about in the media as a question of equality.²²¹

Marginalization is mentioned in governments' proposal already in 2001.²²² The proposal is part of the government's operational programme for preventing poverty and marginalization and its aim is to reform the law on housing finance.²²³ However, when the government mentions "lonely homeless", it again refers to unmarried, divorced or widowed homeless.²²⁴

In debate initiatives, loneliness and marginalization/inequality are mentioned once in 2017. It's an initiative by Pauli Kiuru, a member of parliament from National Coalition, but it is signed by 116 other members (from all political parties) as well.²²⁵ It's an initiative about the significance,

²¹⁸ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-120655

²¹⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-120655 p. 3

²²⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-120655 p. 3

²²¹ STTK 2016

²²² Government proposal 222/2001

²²³ Government proposal 222/2001 p. 1

²²⁴ Government proposal 222/2001 p. 1

²²⁵ Debate initiative 6/2017 all political parties

development trends and changing environment of the Finnish culture ('suomalaisen kulttuurin merkityksestä, kehitystrendeistä ja muuttuvasta toimintaympäristöstä').²²⁶ In it, Kiuru points out that "--culture creates opportunities to experience and feel things together. It reduces feelings of loneliness, detachment and insignificance and therefore prevents marginalization."²²⁷

In expert opinions, loneliness is linked to marginalization or inequality seventeen times. It was mentioned in 2016 altogether three times, in 2017 seven times, in 2018 five times and in 2019 two times.

Marginalization is brought up from very different perspectives in November 2016. A social scientist Mikko Jakonen gives a report about expertise and how it can be taken advantage of in decision making.²²⁸ In the subchapter *Modern expertise and food production* ('Moderni asiantuntijuus ja ruuantuotanto') he concludes that obesity has become a social problem that links to loneliness and social exclusion.²²⁹ In the same month, Christian kindergartens and schools -organization gives the government a report on how its allowances on club activities has been used.²³⁰ In it, they state that the club activity prevents social exclusion and loneliness.²³¹ Once more, social exclusion is mentioned in the same year by Back to Life -organization in its question to the government: "What can we do to prevent children and youth substance abuse problems and social exclusion?" ('Mitä voimme tehdä lasten ja nuorten päihdeongelmien ja syrjäytymisen ehkäisemiseksi?').²³² In it they say that belonging somewhere lessens loneliness.²³³

In 2017, loneliness and social exclusion are linked together seven times. Three of them refer specifically to youth marginalization. These are reports from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ohjaamo Espoo, an organization that offers guidance and help for young people and the Finnish Youth Psychiatric Organization.²³⁴

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health comments on possible threats on children and youth welfare in long sight, and say that in their priority project on youth welfare they aim to prevent loneliness and narrow down equality gaps in order to decrease differences in health and welfare.²³⁵ Youth centre Ohjaamo and the Finnish Youth Psychiatric Organization comment on similar subject.

²²⁶ Debate initiative 6/2017 all political parties

²²⁷ Ibid. p. 1 (translated by me)

²²⁸ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-89415

²²⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-89415 p. 40

²³⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-89998

²³¹ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-89998 p. 1

²³² Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-91287

²³³ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-91287 p. 1

²³⁴ Expert opinions EDK-2017-AK-109251 and EDK-2017-AK-130172 and EDK-2017-AK-144291

²³⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-109251 p. 1

The Finnish Youth Psychiatric Organization statement requires that psychiatric services must be taken care of and availability of psychotherapy must be improved.²³⁶ Furthermore, they say that themes that lead to youth social exclusion are for example loneliness, lack of education problems with language skills and psychic problems.²³⁷

In addition, The Martha Organization and the Centre of Expertise in Social Work in metropolitan area ('pääkaupunkiseudun sosiaalialan osaamiskeskus', SOCCA), mention loneliness and social exclusion in their comments.²³⁸ The Martha Organization's statement is related to the government's budget plan and asks for allowances for its 'Miesliesi-project' ("Manstove-project"), that strengthens men's role in homes and families by offering help and support.²³⁹ They bring up the cost of a marginalized young person (approximately one million euros) and say that Miesliesi-project improves boys' welfare and lessen inequality and loneliness.²⁴⁰ Also, SOCCA-report comments on government's budget plans and brings up the importance of financing social work research.²⁴¹ According to them, there is constantly more research about loneliness' effects on marginalization, falling ill and getting on in life.²⁴² As in many other expert opinions in my data, in both of these documents, preventing loneliness and inequality is used as an argument for state allowances.

In August 2017 a social scientist Heikki Hiilamo gives his report on regional government, health and social services reform.²⁴³ This is an interesting document in my data, because it's the only one with a notion that loneliness and social exclusion pass on from generations.²⁴⁴ In addition, the Central Union for Unemployed ('Työttömien valtakunnallinen keskusjärjestö') comments on the government's proposal to ban zero-hour contracts.²⁴⁵ In it, they note that zero-hour contracts exclude people from tight work communities, and that those who are born in 1980s and 1990s experience the loneliness of work life.²⁴⁶

In 2018 loneliness is linked to social exclusion and inequality in expert opinions five times. The head of research of the Finnish Youth Research Society has commented on Ombudsman for Children's report to parliament ('Lapsiasianvaltuutetun kertomus eduskunnalle') twice.²⁴⁷ In it, they bring up

²³⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-144291 p. 3

²³⁷ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-144291 p. 3

²³⁸ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-157112 and EDK-2017-AK-146696

²³⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-157112 p. 1

²⁴⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-157112 p. 1

²⁴¹ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-146696 p. 1

²⁴² Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-146696 p. 1

²⁴³ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-129028

²⁴⁴ Experts opinion EDK-2017-AK-129028 p. 3

²⁴⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-103447

²⁴⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-103447 p. 2

²⁴⁷ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-175846 and EDK-2018-AK-177436

that lack of friends and loneliness are biggest risks for social exclusion especially for those kids that are outside of education or employment.²⁴⁸ In addition, a special advisor of Ministry of Employment and Economy comments on government's budget proposal's theme 'Challenges in Integration'.²⁴⁹ He mentions that challenges in integration are for example experiences of social exclusion and loneliness.²⁵⁰ Especially kids with immigrant background have problems with bullying and loneliness, although the feeling of loneliness vary according to language and age group.²⁵¹ Also the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra say in their Renovating Democracy ('kansanvallan peruskorjaus') -report that examples of significant phenomena in the society are loneliness and marginalization.²⁵² According to them, loneliness is among those things that increase the feeling of insecurity and it's common among marginalized children.²⁵³ Similar worries are expressed by Ministry of Social Affairs and Health that has given an account of the well-being of Finnish children, and in it they say that social exclusion has to be brought up with children.²⁵⁴

In 2019 loneliness and social exclusion are mentioned twice. These are from the Finnish Red Cross and the Chief Director of Culture and Free time.²⁵⁵ The latter is a comment on physical exercise policy that includes a note that inequality development and loneliness cause human inconvenience that can be affected by physical exercise that furthers citizens' mental health and welfare.²⁵⁶ The Red Cross comments on government's proposal on fund-raising law and says that their fund-raising finances programmes that aim to reduce loneliness and marginalization.²⁵⁷ Again, both of the expert opinions in 2019 refers to preventing loneliness and marginalization as a justification for their work.

²⁴⁸ Expert opinions EDK-2018-AK-175846 p. 6 and EDK-2018-AK-177436 p. 4, 5

²⁴⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-216301

²⁵⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-216301 p. 7

²⁵¹ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-216301 p. 8

²⁵² Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-188713 p. 52

²⁵³ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-188713 p. 66, 67

²⁵⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-194489 p. 146

²⁵⁵ Expert opinions EDK-2019-AK-239018 and EDK-2019-AK-238458

²⁵⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2019-AK-239018 p. 2-3

²⁵⁷ Expert opinion EDK-2019-AK-238458 p. 1

Table 16

HEALTH CARE IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	4	2001 - 2017
Expert opinions	14	2016 - 2018
Debate initiatives	-	-
	= 18	

Loneliness is made a public health issue in my data altogether 19 times, of which four times is in a government proposal and fourteen in an expert opinion.

In government proposals, loneliness is linked to social and health care in 2001, 2010, 2012 and 2017. Therefore, it is a relatively new theme. In 2001 the government proposes a law establishing a service on social and health care development centre statistics ('sosiaali- ja terveystieteen tutkimus- ja kehittämisskeskuksen tilastotoimi').²⁵⁸ The government argues that social and health care sector should collect statistics on for example why a patient has received a house visit, and whether it's caused by physical features or psychic-social reasons such as substance abuse problem or loneliness.²⁵⁹

In 2010 government proposes a law reform on Public Health Act and customer payments, where it for the first time in my data names lonely people as a risk group in addition to widowed, demented or people who are discharged from hospital.²⁶⁰ These groups are targeted with more support and guidance.²⁶¹ Two years later, in a proposal about supporting elderly people's ability to function and their social and health care services, the government concludes again, that certain services should be provided to people, who are in a risk group but don't find their way into services on their own initiative.²⁶² Those who belong to a risk group are, again, family caregivers, recently widowed, lonely, demented or those who have recently been discharged from hospital.²⁶³ In conclusion, it seems that

²⁵⁸ Government proposal 5/2001

²⁵⁹ Government proposal 5/2001 p. 19

²⁶⁰ Government proposal 90/2010 p. 112

²⁶¹ Government proposal 90/2010 p. 112

²⁶² Government proposal 90/2010 p. 40

²⁶³ Government proposal 90/2010 p. 40

in the 2000s the notion that loneliness is risky especially in certain life situations, started to take root.

Loneliness and social and health care institutions have been talked in expert opinions more often, altogether fourteen times, of which in 2016 there is one mention, 2017 five mentions and 2018 eight mentions. Of those, four mentions are related to old people and euthanasia, two to disabled people, one to young people and three to lonely people in general. The first mention is from 2016, when The Centre of Expertise in Social Work of Eastern Finland ('Itä-Suomen sosiaalialan osaamiskeskus, ISO') comments on government's proposal on reforming the social and health care law and says that there is often mental health issues, falling ill, loneliness and feelings of insecurity in the background of adults' and old peoples' crisis.²⁶⁴

In 2017, the Centre of Expertise in Social Work in metropolitan area ('pääkaupunkiseudun sosiaalialan osaamiskeskus'), Finnish Youth Psychiatric Organization (Suomen nuorisopsykiatrinen yhdistys ry) and the Counsellor of Social Welfare in-chief ('ylisosiaalineuvos') Aulikki Kanaoja express their worry about growing loneliness among both young and old people, and say that these problems should be taken into account in the social and health care sector.²⁶⁵ In addition The Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older People comments on the social- and health care reform and says that developing old people's living conditions and preventing loneliness is central in old age individual performance and the use of services.²⁶⁶ Social and health care reform has been commented on by the Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters, who comment specifically on organizations' position and funding.²⁶⁷ They say that voluntary work in social and health organizations offer activities, and that they create a community that many lonely or people with difficult life situations are lacking.²⁶⁸

It seems that in 2018 loneliness has become an argument to support euthanasia. In 2018, two professors, a terminal treatment doctor and the Finnish Orthodox church give their opinion about allowing euthanasia.²⁶⁹ They all mention loneliness in their arguments. Because euthanasia is health care related, I have bundled the opinions into this chapter.

²⁶⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-93864 p. 3

²⁶⁵ Expert opinions EDK-2017-AK-146696, EDK-2017-AK-144291 and EDK-2017-AK-127533

²⁶⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-117948 p. 2

²⁶⁷ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-121920

²⁶⁸ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-121920 p. 9

²⁶⁹ Expert opinions EDK-2018-AK-176725, EDK-2018-AK-177637, EDK-2018-AK-171399 and EDK-2018-AK-173596

Theo Boer says that in many questionable euthanasia cases in the Netherlands, the patient has been lonely, which affected the patient's suffering.²⁷⁰ In relation to this, Tiina Saarto asks how the unbearableness of insignificance, loneliness or tiredness of living can be measured, and can they after all be reasons to end a life.²⁷¹ Terminal treatment doctor Juha Hänninen comments on the same topic and says that pain is not the only thing that causes suffering to terminally ill, but these are also anxiety, lack of control and loneliness.²⁷² On the other hand, the Orthodox Church comments on the same issue by saying that good death can in eastern church perspective mean pain and loneliness, and still be a 'good death'.²⁷³ Loneliness has, therefore, become a state of mind that is widely understood as something harming.

In 2018 a Union for Disabled People ('Kehitysvammaisten tukiliitto ry') comments on government's proposal on freedom of choice in social and health care, focusing on disabled person's personal budget.²⁷⁴ In it, they say that the personal budget has to be flexible: sometimes, for example in preventing loneliness, it is more useful to spend it on a pet or on hobby than on health care.²⁷⁵ Personal budget is also commented by an expert of the city of Tampere, who says that it has problems when it comes to lonely disabled or old people whose only representative is a General Trustee whose services are subject to a charge.²⁷⁶

Customer freedom of choice in social and health care are also commented by Valli - The Finnish Union for Senior Services, and Koske - Centre Finland's Centre of Expertise in Social Work.²⁷⁷ Representatives of Valli say that old people who has low income and who need more support and feel lonely and unsafe, are more affected by the freedom of choice law.²⁷⁸ In addition, Koske's report says that social guiding can improve customer's life situation, since weak socio-economical position, unemployment, family crisis and loneliness put a load on social resilience and health.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁰ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-176725 p. 3

²⁷¹ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-177637 p. 4

²⁷² Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-171399 p. 2

²⁷³ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-173596 p. 2

²⁷⁴ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-190130

²⁷⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-190130 p.4

²⁷⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-190138 p. 2

²⁷⁷ Expert opinions EDK-2018-AK-190459 and EDK-2018-AK-191457

²⁷⁸ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-190459 p. 1

²⁷⁹ Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-191457 p. 2

Table 17

PENITENTIARY IN THE DATA	Amount	Years
Government proposals	16	1985 - 2015
Expert opinions	-	-
Debate initiatives	-	-
	= 16	

In sixteen government proposals, loneliness is linked to punishment in penitentiary. Government has proposed giving up or lessening so-called solitary confinement ('yksinäisyysrangaistus') regularly between 1985 and 2015. There are two proposals from the 1980s, five proposals from the 1990s, four proposals from the 2000s and finally five proposals from the 2010s.

However, in the first proposal (1985), when the government proposed to the parliament a law concerning preliminary investigation and coercive means in criminal cases, solitary of the prisoner is seen as recommendation.²⁸⁰ In it the government concludes that a remand prisoner should not be kept with another prisoner without permission, and in the future the rules will be tightened.²⁸¹ Next year, the government says that according to current legislation, a prisoner should not be kept in solitary confinement against his will, except as a disciplinary punishment.²⁸² However, a prisoner can be chained or set in isolation to prevent violence or escape, but this isolation should be only for short-term.²⁸³ In addition, isolation has to be stopped when it no longer is relevant.²⁸⁴ Health of the isolated prisoners has to be monitored by a doctor.²⁸⁵ Therefore it seems that in the 1980s, it's already visible that isolation is not a recommended.

The first proposal from 1990 suggests an annulment of isolation punishment of life sentenced prisoners.²⁸⁶ In the same year, the government proposes lessening military discipline punishment and improving legal protection of the people liable for military service.²⁸⁷ In the military, the use of

²⁸⁰ Government proposal HE 14/1985

²⁸¹ Government proposal HE 14/1985 p. 80

²⁸² Government proposal HE 99/1986 p. 1

²⁸³ Government proposal HE 99/1986 p. 1

²⁸⁴ Government proposal HE 99/1986 p. 4

²⁸⁵ Government proposal HE 99/1986 p. 6

²⁸⁶ Government proposal HE 23/1990 p. 1

²⁸⁷ Government proposal HE 242/1990 p. 1

detention (which includes isolation) is proposed to be eased.²⁸⁸ Both of the government proposals refer to European Convention on Human Rights. The changes are proposed, because the Finnish national legislation must be in line with the European Convention on Human Rights.²⁸⁹

Still, in proposals for reforming the punishment enforcement and pretrial detention (1994) and reforming the law on jurisdiction and crimes against authorities and order (1997) 'solitary confinement' is mentioned as a disciplinary punishment in prisons.²⁹⁰ Although loneliness is used as a punishment, the aim is to increase the participation in prison activities.²⁹¹

Much had not changed in 1998, when the government intended to intensify drug control in prisons, and mentions loneliness as a possible punishment, or in 2000 when the government proposes to reform the administration of punishment enforcement.²⁹² In these proposals, loneliness is still mentioned as a possible punishment.²⁹³ However, in 2001 the government proposes a possibility to extend the loneliness punishment for a prisoner (from seven days to twenty days).²⁹⁴

Changes happened in 2004, when the government suggested a reform to imprisonment and admitted that loneliness punishment is problematic because of its psychological hardness. The government brought up that in international recommendations the aim is to give up loneliness punishment.²⁹⁵ The government also proposed to shorten the isolation from 20 days to 14 days.²⁹⁶ This is implemented in 2006.²⁹⁷

The most commonly used disciplinary punishment is 'solitary confinement, which was used 658 times in year 2003.²⁹⁸ In this proposal, the government notes that according to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, long-time in isolation is inhuman and demeaning, and therefore can be seen as torture, which is why solitary confinement is exceptional punishment.²⁹⁹ For the same reason, the government notes that loneliness punishment was taken out of use in Sweden already in 1974.³⁰⁰

²⁸⁸ Government proposal HE 242/1990 p. 6

²⁸⁹ Government proposal HE 23/1990 p. 1 Government proposal HE 242/1990 p. 7

²⁹⁰ Government proposal HE 66/1994 p. 15 and Government proposal HE 6/1997 p. 1

²⁹¹ Government proposal HE 66/1994 p. 15

²⁹² Government proposal HE 10/1998 p. 8 and Government proposal HE 136/2000

²⁹³ Government proposal HE 10/1998 p. 8 and Government proposal HE 136/2000 p. 42

²⁹⁴ Government proposal HE 13/2001 p. 26-27

²⁹⁵ Government proposal HE 263/2004 p. 101, 117

²⁹⁶ Government proposal HE 263/2004 p. 109

²⁹⁷ Government proposal HE 45/2014 p. 12

²⁹⁸ Government proposal HE 263/2004 p. 51

²⁹⁹ Government proposal HE 263/2004 p. 64

³⁰⁰ Government proposal HE 263/2004 p. 70

The reason behind the government's will to reform the law is international. European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment has inspected Finland latest in 2003, in which case it also gave Finland multiple recommendations for developing the treatment of prisoners.³⁰¹

In three military discipline laws, loneliness punishment (maximum of 14 days) is mentioned in 2010, 2011 and 2013.³⁰² However, again in 2014, the government wants to shorten the length of loneliness punishment in prisons (from 14 days to 10 days) because of the arguments mentioned in the proposal of 2004.³⁰³ It seems that these changes reflect the increasing knowledge of the harmfulness of continuing isolation.

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) has criticized solitary confinement in prisons for example in 2011. Their report said that this kind of punishment may damage mental, somatic, and social health of the prisoners.³⁰⁴

In conclusion, discussion about loneliness has increased, especially after the year 2010. The groups that are most discussed are children and elderly. The main part of my thesis is analysis, which means that I will not offer a very deep discussion about the reasons behind the numbers. However, I will still offer some views on why the discussion has strengthened.

4. Discussion about the findings

Loneliness is increasingly talked about after 2015 and is discussed mostly in expert opinions. In debate initiatives there are also some mentions between 2000 and 2007.

According to my findings, there are two actor groups that stands out in the data: children (39) and old people (23). Other often-mentioned themes are marginalization (19) and healthcare (18). It is important to note the timings as well - all of the groups and themes have been talked mostly after the year 2015. To take the biggest actor groups as an example:

- Of all the 39 mentions of loneliness and children, 31 took place in 2016 - 2019.
- Of all the 23 mentions of old people, 18 took place in 2015 - 2018

³⁰¹ Government proposal HE 263/2004 p. 65

³⁰² Government proposal HE 25/2010 p. 9 and HE 142/2011 p. 9 and HE 30/2013 p. 11

³⁰³ Government proposal HE 45/2014 p. 1, 12

³⁰⁴ Extract from the 21st General Report of the CPT 2011 p. 1

Child and adolescent loneliness have mostly been brought up by organizations from the third sector. Old age loneliness has been brought up by social and health care organizations, for example Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare, the Centre of Expertise in Social Work of Eastern Finland and Family Care Association, as analysed in chapter 3.2.1.³⁰⁵ There are also discussions about the upcoming social and health care reform, as we also saw in the previous chapter.³⁰⁶ This reform was topical in 2018 and has affected the increase in old age loneliness discussion.

What then, is the reason for the increase in loneliness discussion after the year 2015?

A very important aspect to be considered is the meaning of the word lonely. In my data it is clear the definition has changed during the decades. During the 1980s and 1990s documents *lonely* in the Finnish language refers to unmarried and childless people. In most cases, it appears in economic themes. A government proposal from 1980 about amendment to the employment law is a typical example: unemployment benefit for those who are liable to provide maintenance is 46mk, whereas for *lonely people* it is 33mk.³⁰⁷

Only in the 21st decade the lonely starts to refer to a state of mind or to a feeling rather than to a civil status. This is different in the English language. Already in 1973, Robert Weiss referred to loneliness as depression, grief, distress or “sense of one’s separateness from others”.³⁰⁸ Since I was looking for the times that loneliness refers to state of mind and not to a civil status, this is visible in my data. It was relatively recently that *loneliness* started to refer to people who *feel* lonely.

Next, I will briefly discuss why child loneliness stands out in the data.

4.1. Children in the data

Child and adolescent loneliness were brought up first time in my data in 2000. Most of the discussion, however, has taken place after the year 2010. Children or adolescent are mentioned in the government proposals seven times, in the expert opinions thirty-one times and in debate initiatives once.

³⁰⁵ Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-61765 p. 1, Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-88035 and Expert opinion EDK-2016-AK-93864

³⁰⁶ Expert opinion EDK-2017-AK-127533, Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-190138 p. 2 and Expert opinion EDK-2018-AK-190138 p. 2

³⁰⁷ Government proposal 75/1980 in https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/HallituksenEsitys/Documents/he_75+1980.pdf

³⁰⁸ Weiss 1973 p. 14 - 15

Child loneliness was discussed relatively often in the Parliament during 2016 and 2018. This took place during the Finland's 74th Government, when Juha Sipilä was a prime minister.³⁰⁹ What then were the events that made the notion of child and adolescent loneliness enter the political agenda in Finland prior to 2015?

One reason behind this is undoubtedly the research that took place that time. In addition, child and adolescent loneliness as an important research question entered the media and therefore reached wider audience. Scholars such as Niina Junttila has become known in the media for talking about the importance of tackling child loneliness.³¹⁰ Increase in media attention in this kind of research did not remain unnoticed by the Government. In 2017 prime minister Juha Sipilä set up a work group with aforementioned Juho Saari as its leader to find ways to tackle marginalization, and decrease in loneliness was marked as one of the central ways to do that.³¹¹ These acts from prime minister have most likely been a central reason for the topic to enter the parliamentary debate.

In addition, a possible security threat that the lonely youth causes may have been one reason for the decision-makers to open the discussion. Finland has had couple of school shootings in this century: Jokela in 2007 and Kauhajoki in 2008. In addition, 25-year-old Joel Marin killed one student when attacking a classroom in Kuopio vocational college in 2019.³¹² There has also been other teenager-attackers in Finland. In 2012, a 18 year old Eero Hiltunen killed two people in the city of Hyvinkää with a rifle, and in 2002 there was a bomb attack in Myyrmanni shopping mall, where the offender was a 19-year-old student that had, according to the media, been both lonely and bullied.³¹³

An investigative committee's report on the Kauhajoki school shooting in 2008 reveals interesting facts about the school shooters' background. According to the report, marginalized (i.e. outside of working life) men are over-represented in the Finnish crimes of violence.³¹⁴ The report also concludes that the Kauhajoki-shooting, as a second well-remembered shooting in the 21st century Finland, was not an individual case.³¹⁵ According to American scholars, that have collected attributes that school shooters have in common, the feeling of marginalization or disconnection to one's immediate surroundings are essential to violent offenders.³¹⁶ In American school shooting cases,

³⁰⁹ Finnish Governments (Valtioneuvosto.fi): <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/tietoa/historiaa/hallitukset-ja-ministerit/raportti-/r/m1/74>

³¹⁰ Rimaila 2018 and Junttila (column) 2018

³¹¹ Government's Newsletter (Department of Communication) 2018

³¹² Salminen 2019

³¹³ MTV News 2016 and Pelkonen 2012

³¹⁴ Kauhajoen koulusurmat 23.9. 2008 tutkintalautakunnan raportti p. 94

³¹⁵ Kauhajoen koulusurmat 23.9.2008 tutkintalautakunnan raportti p. 101

³¹⁶ Kauhajoen koulusurmat 23.9.2008 tutkintalautakunnan raportti p. 101

93% of the offenders have experienced bullying or rejection.³¹⁷ A report made by a Finnish Academy of Science in 2011 makes the same conclusion about Finnish school shooters.³¹⁸ Almost everyone (98%) has experienced a severe loss (either of a relationship or a reputation) before the shooting.³¹⁹ However, only 12% of the American school killers have been completely without friends.³²⁰ Still, as a subjective feeling, loneliness cannot be measured by the amount of friends, as Junttila has pointed out in her research.³²¹

Jokela and Kauhajoki shootings made it clear to the public audience that loneliness and bullying are not only an individual problem, but a possible security threat to the whole society. Media brought up stories about bullied kids that are potential in committing a crime. For example, after the Kauhajoki shootings, in October 2008, Suomen Kuvalehti -journal told a story of a potential mass-killer, Lauri, that had been bullied at school.³²² In addition, in 2016 Yle News told about another potential killer, Maija, with a headline "When bullying could kill – Maija was a potential school killer"³²³. It was not the first time that bullied kids have been seen as a potential security threat: already in 2006, couple of years before the big mass shootings, University student magazine (Ylioppilaslehti) made an article about the (first) school shooter, a 14 year old school bullied Jussi that shot two of his class mates at school in 1989.³²⁴ The headline of the article was "The short history of school bullying".

With these kinds of narratives, media has built a straight link between bullying and mass killings. I claim that this means that it became an issue that the state authorities had to intervene in and in turn it became an often-mentioned issue in the parliament and the media in the 2010s.

5. Conclusions

My research questions were:

- How often has loneliness been brought up between the years 1980 and 2019 in Finnish governmental documents?
- Which (if any) actor groups and themes can be identified?
- By whom have the actor groups and themes been brought up?
- If there is a change - why?

³¹⁷ Kauhajoen koulusurmat 23.9.2008 tutkintalautakunnan raportti p. 102

³¹⁸ Punamäki, Tirri, Nokelainen & Marttunen 2011 p. 8, 27

³¹⁹ Kauhajoen koulusurmat 23.9.2008 tutkintalautakunnan raportti p. 102

³²⁰ Kauhajoen koulusurmat 23.9.2008 tutkintalautakunnan raportti p. 102

³²¹ Junttila 2015 p. 18

³²² Merikallio 2008

³²³ Pietarinen & Rigatelli 2016

³²⁴ Ylioppilaslehti 2006

I answered the first question by using a quantitative method and by categorizing my findings as is seen in table 1. The most important finding is that loneliness discussion has increased and peaked only in the 2010s. The most often mentioned group is child loneliness.

In the first part of my thesis, I went through Governmental archives from 1980 to 2019s and looked for the word *yksinäi** to see which actor group and themes the word lonely has been linked to. My data consisted of three parts: government proposals, expert opinions, and debate initiatives. I went through all the documents and categorized my findings. I only included those times when lonely referred to a subjective feeling, and not those times when lonely referred to single households.

The most important finding at this point was that loneliness as a subjective feeling is a relatively new topic in the parliamentary discussions - it started to emerge only in the 2000s and peaked after 2015.

In the second part of my thesis, I looked through my findings again and viewed *who* had brought up loneliness and *why*. I found out that in the 2000s, organizations used the prevention of loneliness as an argument to get funding or to justify the importance of their work. This proves that in the 2000s loneliness had become something that is considered harmful. This is also visible in the data about penitentiary: solitary confinement became a resented form of punishment in the penitentiary and social institutions.

I briefly discussed possible reasons for the fact that children and young people are so often mentioned in the data after 2016. Timewise, the findings correlate with major school shootings in Finland in 2007 and 2008. These incidents could be seen to change to way loneliness is seen. It had become a security threat. The timings also overlap with the change in administration. Peppi Saikku and Raija Julkunen have studied responsibility, and the shift has been towards “less state, more municipality”. The roles have also become more unclear, and the role of individuals themselves over their own wellbeing has increased especially during the Government of Juha Sipilä in 2015-2019, which is the end of my study period. It is interesting that while the state has started to shift responsibilities to other operators, the demands towards the state has increased, as my thesis shows.

In the 2010s, loneliness was talked a lot in the media, also as part of school shootings and bullying. Child loneliness, especially loneliness of young men, became a security threat in the media. In addition to this, there was a growing amount of research in child loneliness, and about its links to marginalization and more broadly to mental health problems. While for example Saikku talks about

the change in welfare policy discourse, he does not mention its links to security. Security is a relatively new viewpoint: The Finnish Security and Intelligence Service (Supo) mentions only in 2020 that lone operators are among the biggest security threats in Finland.

My thesis argues that loneliness in the Parliament has always been talked about through something else, or as a “side effect” of another problem. Only time that loneliness has been brought as a problem itself was in 2000, when a Social Democratic representative Tapani Tölli made a debate initiative with a headline “Improving the position of lonely people” (‘yksinäisen ihmisten aseman parantaminen’).³²⁵

In future research, it would be useful to widen the data from government proposals, expert opinions, and debate initiatives to for example committee reports, plenary sessions, or written questions. It seems clear that the economic, social, and humanitarian problems that the loneliness causes are not going anywhere in the near future.

³²⁵ Debate initiative 8/2000 Ilkka Tapale

6. References

Alatupa, Saija; Karppinen, Krister; Keltikangas-Järvinen, Liisa & Savioja, Hannele (2007): *Koulu, syrjäytyminen ja sosiaalinen pääoma – Löytyykö huono-osaisuuden syy koulusta vai oppilaasta?* Sitra

Ankkurihanke: Official webpage of the police https://www.poliisi.fi/ita-suomi/prime108_fi.aspx

Anttila, Pekka: *Mielenterveysongelmat vievät joka päivä viisi alle 30-vuotiasta eläkkeelle*. Suomen Kuvalehti 18.1.2011 <https://suomenkuvalehti.fi/jutut/kotimaa/mielenterveysongelmat-vievat-joka-paiva-viisi-alle-30-vuotiasta-elakkeelle/>

Barthes, Roland: An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative. *New Literary History Vol 6, no. 2. On Narrative and Narratives*. (Winter, 1975), pp. 237-272.
https://www.uv.es/fores/Barthes_Structural_Narrative.pdf

Brueck, Hilary: *We are learning more about how social isolation damages your brain and body - here are the biggest effects*. Business Insider 3.7.2018 <https://www.businessinsider.com/why-loneliness-bad-brain-body-what-to-do-2018-5?r=US&IR=T>

Burr, Vivien (2003): *Social Constructionism*. Routledge

Cacioppo, John; Cacioppo, Stephanie & Boomsma, Dorret (2014): Evolutionary mechanisms for loneliness. *Cognition & Emotion*, 28:1, 3-21, DOI: 10.1080/02699931.2013.837379

Cacioppo, John; Cacioppo, Stephanie & Capitanio, John (2014): Toward a Neurology of Loneliness. *Psychological Bulletin* 2014, vol. 140, No. 6, 1464 - 1504. American Psychology Association

Coleman, James (1990): *Foundations of Social Theory*. Harvard University Press

European Commission, Migration and Home Affairs: Definitions https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/immigrant_en

Extract from the 21st General Report of the CPT – European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment: *Solitary Confinement of Prisoners 2011* <https://rm.coe.int/16806cccc6>

Finnish Security and Intelligence Service: National security Review 2020:
https://supo.fi/documents/38197657/39761269/Supo_national-security-overview-2020.pdf/6234d8c5-9eec-c801-0eec-2529ed5be701/Supo_national-security-overview-2020.pdf?t=1603884700679

Franzosi, Roberto (1998): Narrative Analysis - or why (and how) sociologists should be interested in narrative? *Annual Review Sociology* Vol. 24 (1), p. 517 - 555

Franzosi, Roberto (2010): *Quantitative narrative analysis*. Sage Publications

Government's Online Archives:

https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/search/Sivut/Vaskiresults.aspx#k=Yksin%C3%A4i*

Government's Newsletter (Department of Communication): *Eriarvoisuutta käsitellyt työryhmä luovutti loppuraporttinsa pääministerille 21.3.2018* https://valtioneuvosto.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/10616/eriarvoisuutta-kasitellyt-tyoryhma-luovutti-loppuraporttinsa-paaministerille

Government's Newsletter (Ministry of Justice): *Tutkintaryhmä selvittämään Turun puukotusta. 19.10.2017* https://valtioneuvosto.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/1410853/tutkintaryhma-selvittamaan-turun-puukotusta

Government's Newsletter (Department of Communication): *Pääministeri asetti työryhmän etsimään ratkaisuja eriarvoistumisen pysäyttämiseksi. 17.1.2017* https://valtioneuvosto.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/10616/paaministeri-asetti-tyoryhman-etsimaan-ratkaisuja-eriarvoistumisen-pysayttamiseksi

Government's Halfway Report: *Nuorten syrjäytymisen vähentäminen 25.4.2017* <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/10616/4592272/Hallituksen-linjaukset-syrjaytymisen-vahentamiseksi.pdf/ef2dc3b7-8459-497e-b0cf-77b4ea9cf686>

Government's Webpage: Finnish Governments <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/tietoa/historiaa/hallitukset-ja-ministerit/raportti/-/r/m1/74>

Hajer, Maarten (1993): Discourse Coalitions and the Institutionalization of Practice: The Case of Acid Rain in Britain in Fischer, Frank & Forester, John: *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*. Duke University Press

Hajer Maarten (1995): *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process*. Clarendon Press

Hjelt, Yrjö: Tutkija kaipaa Suomeen yksinäisyysministeriä ja iloitsee myöhästelevistä junista, koska ne saavat tuppisuut juttelemaan. Yle Uutiset 17.2.2019 <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10642260>

Holstein, James & Gubrium, Jaber (2016): *Varieties of narrative analysis*. SAGE Research

Hyvärinen, Matti (2008): Analyzing Narratives and Story-Telling in Alasuutari, Pertti; Bickman, Leonard & Brannen, Julian: *The SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods*. SAGE Research

Härkönen, Rebekka: *Näihin toimenpiteisiin Turun terrori-iskusta annetut turvallisuussuositukset johtivat – Osa jäi kokonaan toteutumatta 20.5.2019* <https://www.aamulehti.fi/a/4db546ed-32e4-415f-9b8f-6a27389a148a>

Investigating Committee of Kauhajoki school shooting, a report 11/2010 *Kauhajoen koulusurmat 23.9.2008 Tutkintalautakunnan raportti* http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/76205/omso_11_2010_selvitys_180_s.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Julkunen, Raija (2007): *Kuka vastaa? Hyvinvointivaltion rajat ja julkinen vastuu*. Sosiaali- ja terveysalan tutkimus- ja kehittämiskeskus

Julkunen, Raija (2001): *Suunnanmuutos: 1990-luvun sosiaalipoliittinen reformi Suomessa*. Vastapaino

Junttila, Niina: *Niina Junttilan kolumni: Miten nuorilla menee? No me kysyimme*. Yle Uutiset 24.4.2018 <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10173690>

Junttila, Niina (2018): *Kaiken keskellä yksin*. Tammi

Junttila, Niina (2015): *Kavereita nolla*. Tammi

Kallionpää, Katri: *Ei heilaa helluntaina, eikä milloinkaan – neljä tarinaa yksinäisyydestä*. Helsingin Sanomat 22.5.2015 <https://www.hs.fi/elama/art-2000002826071.html>

Kananen, Johannes (2014): *The Nordic welfare state in three eras: from emancipation to discipline*. Ashgate Publishing

Kankkonen, Tom: *Pohjoismaat tiukentavat kilvan turvapaikkasääntöjä: Tulijat teltoihin, perheenyhdistäminen vaikeaksi*. Yle Uutiset 20.6.2016 <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-8970418>

Kaplan, Sarah (2015): *Mixing quantitative and qualitative research in Handbook of Innovative Qualitative Research Methods: Pathways to Cool Ideas and Interesting Papers*. Routledge

Kilpi, Marko: Marko Kilven kolumni: *Suomi on mielenterveysongelmien luvattu maa*. Yle 12.3.2018 <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10105561>

Kontula, Osmo & Saari, Juho (2016). *Yksinäisyys parisuhteessa*. Teoksessa *Yksinäisten Suomi* (toim. Juho Saari). Gaudeamus s. 164-181.

Koselleck, Reinhart (2002): *The Practice of Conceptual History Timing History, Spacing Concepts*. Stanford University Press

Koskinen, Tero: *Poliitikot heräsivät yksinäisten hätään – näin he tarttuivat ongelmaan*. Ilta-Sanomat 27.3.2018 <https://www.is.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005613941.html>

Kuukkanen, Tatu: *Terrorismin tutkija: Turun veitsi-isku voi olla ensimmäinen jihadistinen terroriteko Suomessa*. Yle Uutiset 19.8.2017 <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9783391>

Lazzari, Carlo; Nusair, Abdul and Rabottini, Marco (2019): *Psychiatry of Radicalization and Terrorism in the Lone Wolf, Children, and Women: An E-ethnographic Approach for Analysis*. American Journal of Psychiatry and Neuroscience 2019; 7(3): 57-68

Liao, Tim (2010): Series Editor's Introduction in Franzosi, Roberto (2010): *Quantitative narrative analysis*. Sage Publications

Liimatainen, Jori: *Turun yliopisto mukana turvapaikanhakijoiden mielenterveyden edistämisen hankkeessa*. Turun Sanomat 4.1.2018 <https://www.ts.fi/uutiset/paikalliset/3789318/Turun+yliopisto+mukana+turvapaikanhakijoiden+mielenterveyden+edistamisen+hankkeessa>

Lohvansuu, Jenni & Luukkonen, Elina (2012): *"Kun minä olin muuttanut tänne, minä halusin aloittaa joku uusi elämä."* – Nuorten aikuisten maahanmuuttajien kokemuksia ja toiveita kotouttamisesta. Saimaan ammattikorkeakoulu, sosiaali- ja terveysalan opinnäytetyö

Magen, Jed: *Loneliness is bad for your health*. The Conversation. 26.2.2018

<https://theconversation.com/loneliness-is-bad-for-your-health-90901>

Merikallio, Katri: *Koulusurmat: Lauri on mahdollinen joukkomurhaaja*. Suomen Kuvalehti 7.10.2008

<https://suomenkuvalehti.fi/jutut/kotimaa/koulusurmat-lauri-on-mahdollinen-joukkomurhaaja/>

Merriam-Webster Dictionary <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/radical>

Ministry of Interior News: *Radikalisoitunut henkilö on saatava paremmin palvelujen pariin* 27.5.2019

<https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/1410869/radikalisoitunut-henkilo-on-saatava-paremmen-palvelujen-pariin>

MTV News: 11.10.2002: *Myyrmannin pommi-isku tapahtui kesken pelle-esityksen – tekijän motiivi jäi*

salaisuudeksi. 1.9.2016 <https://www.mtvuutiset.fi/artikkeli/11-10-2002-myyrmannin-pommi-isku-tapahtui-kesken-pelle-esityksen-tekijan-motiivi-jai-salaisuudeksi/6050768#gs.6oxsuz>

Nykänen, Riika & Hujanen, Miikka: *Suojelupoliisi Lontoon hyökkäyksestä: Yksinäisten susien uhka*

Suomessa on kohonnut. Ilta-Sanomat 24.3.2017 <https://www.is.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000005139893.html>

Palonen, Kari (2012): *Parlamentarismi retorisena politiikkana*. Vastapaino

Parliamentary Archive (Government proposals, debate initiatives and expert opinions):

<https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/search/Sivut/Vaskiresults.aspx?k=yksin%C3%A4i%2A>

Parliamentary Webpage: Hallituksen esitykset

<https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/valtiopaivaasiat/Sivut/hallituksen-esitykset.aspx>

Parliamentary Webpage: Kansanedustajien keskustelualoitteet

<https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/valtiopaivaasiat/Sivut/keskustelualoitteet.aspx>

Parliamentary Webpage: Lakien säätäminen eduskunnassa

https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/naineduskuntatoimii/eduskunnan_tehtavat/lakiensaaminen/Sivut/default.aspx

Pelkonen, Linda: *Poliisi: Näin kaikki tapahtui – Hyvinkään ampujan päivä ja yö tunti tunnilta*. Uusi

Suomi 19.12.2012 <https://www.uusisuomi.fi/uutiset/poliisi-nain-kaikki-tapahtui-hyvinkaan-ampujan-paiva-ja-yo-tunti-tunnilta/8ecb4447-ca2c-334c-9cfa-553a38b784ed>

Pekonen, Kyösti (2011): *Puhe eduskunnassa*. Vastapaino

Pietarinen, Eetu & Rigatelli, Sara: *Kun koulukiusaaminen voisi tappaa – Maija oli mahdollinen*

koulusurmaaja. Yle Uutiset 22.5.2016 <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-8890329>

Punamäki, Raija-Leena; Tirri, Kirsi; Nokelainen, Petri; & Marttunen, Mauri (2011) *Koulusurmat:*

Yhteiskunnalliset ja psykologiset taustat ja ehkäisy. (Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemia kannanottoja; No. 2). Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.

Rajapintahanke: Ministry of Justice webpage

<https://oikeusministerio.fi/en/project?tunnus=SM017:00/2018>

Rautio, Marjatta & Juutilainen, Ville: *Näin Suomi muuttui – katso miten turvapaikkakriisi eteni ja*

näkyi vuonna 2015. Yle Uutiset 19.2.2016 <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-8595369>

- Riffe, Daniel; Lacy, Stephen and Fico, Frederick (2014): *Analyzing media messages - Using quantitative content analysis in research*. Routledge
- Rigney, Ann (2013): *History as Text: Narrative Theory and History* in Nancy Partner & Sarah Foot (ed.): *The SAGE Handbook of Historical Theory*. Sage Publications
- Rimaila, Elisa: "Mieluummin ottaisin, että joku vaikka hakkaisi mua kuin tön, ettei kukaan edes huomaa" – 2000-luvun lapset ovat yksinäisempiä kuin ennen, mistä se johtuu ja miten yksinäistä voi auttaa? Helsingin Sanomat 26.11.2018 <https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005909710.html>
- Rubin, Philip (2019): In Memoriam John T. Cacioppo (1951 - 2018) in *American Psychologist* 2019 vol. 74, No. 6, 745 <https://haskinslabs.org/sites/default/files/files/Reprints/rubincacioppo.pdf>
- Rönkä, Anna (2016): *Yksinäisyyden kokemisen, eriarvoisuuden ja intersektionaalisen näkökulman kietoutumia pohjoissuomalaisten nuorten aikuisten elämänseläisyydessä*. A presentation about doctoral thesis in University of Oulu https://www3.uef.fi/documents/128231/0/Anna_Ronka/bad4b087-4bfc-44bd-b888-61b21351fd8d
- Saari, Juho (2015): *Huono-osaiset*. Gaudeamus
- Saari, Juho (2012): *Onnellisuuspolitiikka – kohti sosiaalisesti kestäväää Suomea*. Bookwell Oy
- Saari, Juho (2016): *Yksinäisten Suomi*. Gaudeamus
- Saari, Juho (2010): *Yksinäisten yhteiskunta*. Sanoma Pro Oy
- Saikkku, Peppi (2018): *Valtion ja kuntien vastuunjako pitkäaikaistyöttömien aktivoinnissa – sisällönanalyysi hallitusohjelmista ja hallituksen esityksistä vuosina 1995–2015*. Terveystieteiden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. Janus vol. 26 (2) 2018, 104–122
- Sajari, Petri: *Pitkäaikainen työvoimapulaa kalvaa lakien valmistelua*. Helsingin Sanomat 21.11.2020 <https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000007632660.html>
- Salminen, Solmu: *KRP epäilee: Kuopion miekkasurmaaja suunnitteli vieläkin suuremman väkijoukon tappamista*. Iltalehti 28.10.2019 <https://www.iltalehti.fi/kotimaa/a/cd7b5c82-9984-4900-9373-324629c3db6d>
- Siltala, Juha (2013): *Nuoriso - mainettaan parempi?* WSOY Helsinki
- Similä, Ville: *Terroristit julistetaan usein liian hätäisesti "yksinäisiksi susiksi" – oikeasti täysin itsenäiset toimijat ovat harvinaisia* Helsingin Sanomat 5.6.2017 <https://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000005241710.html>
- Skinner, Quentin (1999): *Rhetoric and Conceptual Change*, In *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, University of Jyväskylä
- Statistics Finland (Tilastokeskus): *890, 000 people were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2017* 24.5.2019 https://www.stat.fi/til/eot/2017/eot_2017_2019-05-24_tie_001_en.html
- STTK: *Naisten lasikatot vai miesten syrjäytyminen* 7.11.2016 <https://www.sttk.fi/2016/11/07/naisten-lasikatot-miesten-syrjaytyminen/>
- Suoninen, Eero (2016): *Kielenkäytön vaihtelevuuden analysoiminen* in Jokinen, Arja; Juhila, Kirsi & Suoninen, Eero: *Diskurssianalyysi – Teoriat, peruskäsitteet ja käyttö*. Vastapaino

Taivalsaari, Lea: *Tutkimus: köyhyys lisää yksinäisyyttä Helsingissä*. Helsinki Missio 17.2.2020
<https://www.helsinkimissio.fi/myotatuntuutisia/tutkimus-koyhyys-lisaa-yksinaisyytta-helsingissa>

Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos (2017): *Poimintoja aikuisväestön terveydestä, hyvinvoinnista ja elinoloista Suomessa 2013-2016 – ATH-tutkimuksen tuloksia*.
http://www.julkari.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/132117/URN_ISBN_978-952-302-842-5.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Tiilikainen, Elisa (2016): *Yksinäisyys ja elämänkulku: Laadullinen seurantatutkimus ikääntyvien yksinäisyydestä*. University of Helsinki, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social Studies Doctoral Thesis
file:///C:/Users/Sari/AppData/Local/Temp/yksinaisyyys_ja_elamankulku_ETHESIS_korjattu.pdf

Tiippana, Kristiina: *Suomessa tunnetaan monta murheellista ruumislöytöä: Vasta haju ja karpäset paljastivat kotonaan kuolleen maanseen ihmisen*. Iltalehti 20.7.2018
<https://www.iltalehti.fi/kotimaa/a/201807202201087435>

Turunen, Petri: *Kuolinpaikoilla kaiken nähnyt poliisi ei unohda Maunulan muumiota – komisario paljastaa Armanille kuolinasuntojen pahimmat näyt*. Ilta-Sanomat 5.6.2018
<https://www.is.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005707650.html>

Uotila, Hanna (2011): *Vanhuus ja yksinäisyys – tutkimus iäkkäiden ihmisten yksinäisyyskokemuksista, niiden merkityksistä ja tulkinnoista*. University of Tampere Doctoral Thesis

Upola, Terhi: *Yliopistoiskua suunnitelleet olivat yksinäisiä – miten tällaisia rikoksia voisi ehkäistä?* Yle Uutiset 27.5.2014 <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-7264724>

Uusivirta, Mari & Palmén-Väisänen, Annukka: *”Tästä tunnistaa terroristin” – Jos joku sanoo näin radikalisoitumisesta, hän todennäköisesti valehtelee*. Yle Uutiset 25.9.2018
<https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2018/09/25/tasta-tunnistaa-terroristin-jos-joku-sanoo-nain-radikalisoitumisesta-han>

Valtonen, Olli: *Yhteiskunta havahtui yksinäisyyteen*. Helsinki Missio 6.10.2017
<https://www.helsinkimissio.fi/myotatuntuutisia/yhteiskunta-havahtui-yksinaisyyteen>

Weiss, Robert (1973): *Loneliness - The Experience of Emotional and Social Isolation*. The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London

White, Hayden (1987): *The Content of the Form. Narrative, Discourse and Historical Representation*. The Johns Hopkins University Press

Ylioppilaslehti: *Koulukiusaamisen lyhyt historia*. 27.1.2006
<https://ylioppilaslehti.fi/2006/01/koulukiusaamisen-lyhyt-historia/>